



Vaccine plan should easily cover 80-plus population: Disero

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

NOTL's three planned COVID-19 vaccine clinics should ensure that everyone in town over 80 who wants a shot gets one, Lord Mayor Betty Disero says.

There are about 1,300 residents over 80 in town and the clinics at the community centre are expected to handle 400 people daily, meaning all those wanting the vaccine should get it.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's first COVID-19 vaccine clinic for people 80 and up will be March 31, about two weeks after the region's first clinic in Niagara Falls and one week after the first in Welland.

The public health clinic will be held inside the NOTL Community Centre auditorium and public health officials say more than 400 people are expected to be vaccinated between 9 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Two more NOTL clinics will take place April 1 and 9. However, residents who want the vaccine sooner can book their shots at any clinic in the region – or the province.

Continued on Page 12

Native centre hosts vaccine clinic

Executive director views priority vaccines as act of goodwill to Indigenous community



Niagara Regional Native Centre executive director Karl Dockstader is one of the last to get his dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine on Monday at the centre's Niagara-on-the-Lake facility. The clinic was put on by Niagara Region public health, which prioritized Indigenous communities. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

A steady stream of people received their COVID-19 vaccinations on Monday in Niagara-on-the-Lake during a clinic at the Niagara Regional Native Centre.

The clinic was a partnership between Niagara Region public health and the native centre, as part of the

region's aim to make Indigenous people a priority for vaccinations.

Karl Dockstader, executive director of the native centre, said about 500 people received vaccines during the clinic.

It was a bit of a whirlwind putting it all together, with the centre doing its own bookings and having to change gears to essentially be a call centre for a week, he said.

"We've only been planning for about three weeks and we've only been collecting names really for the past week, and this is so far from what we do. So this has come together really quick for us," he said in an interview during the clinic.

Unlike the province's vaccine rollout for non-Indigenous people, the clinic saw people of various age groups receiving their shots.

Dockstader said the "priority" was people 55 and older, but that all Indigenous adults are eligible under the province's rollout plan.

"We organized it, and that was messy. Did we strictly get every indigenous person that's 55-plus only on our list? We tried, we really tried."

Continued on Page 8

Barbara Ahluwalia: Committed to our past and our future

Tim Taylor
The Lake Report

Even at almost 88 years of age, Barbara Ahluwalia has not lost a step in her commitment to the town she first saw 54 years ago this coming November, when she and her young family emigrated from the United

Kingdom.

Name a local community organization and she has probably dedicated many years to its success — nursery school, Newark Neighbours, library board, golf club board, the Pumphouse, and the list goes on.

But her eyes light up when the conversation turns to

the small commemorative monument on the grounds of the former Parliament Oak School on King Street in Old Town.

"I used to walk a lot," she remembers. "So, I'm walking by Parliament Oak school and there is this little monument. I have to go and poke my nose in and see

what it is."

It turns out the small monument is a kind of leftover from a summer project in the late 1980s at Artpark, the cultural centre in Lewiston, N.Y. It is one of a number that were commissioned that year to com-



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Barbara Ahluwalia, with her husband Ranjit. FILE PHOTO



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Queen Street **hoarding** raises ire of NOTL councillors

Evan Saunders
The Lake Report

Long-term construction hoarding along two properties on Queen Street has become an ongoing source of consternation for Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors, with the town looking at creating a bylaw to limit how long hoarding can be used.

Hoarding fences and signs are put up around ongoing construction projects to obscure public view and prevent unwarranted entry onto dangerous properties.

And, after roughly six years of hoarding on two Queen Street properties, councillors are looking for ways to hurry the projects along and maybe make the hoarding more visually appealing while it is up.

At a committee of the whole meeting March 4, Coun. Gary Burroughs raised the concern to senior staff in hopes that they could find a legal mechanism to limit the length of time that hoarding can be up.

It "can't just be allowed to go on forever," Burroughs said.

Although the town is looking to address the issue of hoardings in general, the conversation was spurred by projects at 165 Queen



Hoarding on Queen Street by Solmar Development Corp. RICHARD HARLEY

St., managed by Solmar Development Corp., and 65 Queen St., managed by Niacon Ltd. Construction Company.

Neither Solmar nor Niacon responded to requests for comment before press time.

In an interview on Tuesday, Burroughs said the lack of response and action from the companies is an issue of goodwill with the town and its residents.

"I understand that sometimes there's legal things that have to be wrapped up. But the problem is the neighbours have put up with all this development for a long time and these companies should get it done."

He said he will be pursuing the creation of a bylaw to limit hoarding.

During the meeting, director of operations Sheldon Randall told councillors the town had previously been in touch with both owners of the properties and that, due to challenges related to engineering and COVID, the "circumstances are out of our control."

Burroughs decried using COVID as an excuse.

"I can't believe Solmar is using COVID as an issue for not building. There's about 25 buildings going on in downtown, including residential and commercial sites. They're all over the place."

Burroughs is concerned with the impact that the two unfinished construction sites have on neighbouring buildings and residents.

"The smaller property has a lot of water in the hole that they dug, and it can't be healthy for the neighbours or anybody else," Burroughs told council.

Standing pools of water can be nesting sites for various pests and bacteria, notably for mosquitoes, according to ontariotrails.on.ca.

"And not only that, it becomes a structural issue for the buildings next door. Because they've dug down quite a ways and then not

completed," Burroughs told The Lake Report.

"The two properties on each side are definitely affected by it and it doesn't seem fair to me."

As spring draws near the town is beginning to invest time in cleaning up the various public amenities that visitors will be using in NOTL. The businesses on Queen Street, near where the hoardings are located, are one of the main draws for visitors to the town.

In the past the Communities in Bloom committee was tasked with decorating the hoardings with images of what the properties will look like when completed.

But that was quite some time ago. "Back in 2015, or something like that," Lord Mayor Betty Disero told council and the artwork has faded with time.

The town may once again take it upon itself to decorate the hoardings in a similar manner to lessen the impact of the properties as a visual eyesore on the community, and give residents and visitors "something to look forward to," Coun. Wendy Cheropita said.

The idea of redecorating the hoardings to make them more visually appealing was favoured by councillors, but Burroughs didn't want the town to misdirect its efforts.

"I don't want to lose sight of the issue. This is fine about decorating the hoardings, (but) my initial problem is the hoardings. Somehow, we have to put time (limits) on these," Burroughs told councillors.

He also stressed that this is not supposed to be an antagonistic issue between the town and developers, but rather an attempt for both to co-operate in order to see these buildings finished.

"It's not for the benefit of only one side. It's saying, 'We want you to be successful, get on with it, and let's make the town and Queen Street look more beautiful than it does now.'"

Marotta **drops** heritage designation lawsuit for Rand Estate

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Developer Benny Marotta has dropped his controversial lawsuit challenging the town's historic designation of two properties that make up the Rand Estate.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council designated the properties, 177 and 244 John St. E., during its final meeting of 2020 on Dec. 21.

Marotta filed his initial lawsuit to challenge the town's intention to designate the properties in 2018.

The Ontario Superior Court rejected Marotta's challenge and awarded costs to the town and resident group Save Our Rand Estate, which was granted

party status in the hearing.

According to an email sent to SORE's supporters Wednesday, Marotta's companies paid the town and SORE a combined \$170,000 in costs in order to walk away from the appeal.

Marotta did not respond to a request for comment before press time.

"In SORE's view, the Marotta court challenge was always spurious and a thinly veiled attempt to bully the town and its residents," the group said.

"SORE is grateful for the able support of the town in pushing back against these bully tactics."

Marotta is maintaining his challenge before the Conservation Review Board

regarding the town's notices of intent to designate the other two properties of the Rand Estate, 200 John St. E. and 588 Charlotte St. under the Heritage Act.

The challenge is scheduled to be heard in early July.

Marotta had originally planned to build a seven-storey hotel and conference centre on the 177 and 244 John St. E. properties, but abandoned those plans last October when he listed the properties for sale for \$19 million.

Marotta has said he still intends to follow through with a subdivision on the remaining two properties. He bought the four properties in February 2017 for \$7.25 million.



Developer Benny Marotta has abandoned his plans for a hotel on the Rand Estate. SUPPLIED



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Town gearing up for heavy tourist season

Evan Saunders
Special to The Lake Report



Visitors are already starting to return to NOTL. FILE

As spring's warm weather and sunshine invariably draw nearer, Niagara-on-the-Lake councillors are preparing for an influx of visitors by looking at ways to ensure public amenities are ready and programs are under way to promote public safety and COVID precautions.

It is no secret that NOTL is a beloved community for provincial and international tourists. Visitors come to enjoy its natural beauty, world-class vineyards, and to peruse its businesses and heritage sites.

"As soon as the sun comes out in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the streets and the parks become very full," Coun. Gary Burroughs said at a committee of the whole meeting on March 8.

And while the town reaps economic benefits when visitors come, officials are concerned rising COVID cases mean this is a time for increased, not decreased, co-operation with COVID-19 safety measures.

"We are always discussing how we can help businesses and how we can help residents. First and foremost is the safety of the citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and everything follows from there," Lord Mayor Betty Disero said in an interview Tuesday.

Councillors are discussing the possibility of temporary

ily closing parks, "for a month or so," according to Burroughs. This would be done to give town staff the opportunity to clean up the parks and perform repairs before a large influx of people start regularly visiting the town.

"I don't believe we are going to do that," Disero said. "The parks will remain open as staff cut the grass, clean up, put things in order. Now that's just me, there are nine members on council."

"Our staff will work as diligently as they do every year to bring the parks up to standard."

The town has also been actively discussing re-introducing the popular NOTL ambassadors programs active last year.

There are two ambassador programs. One for parks run by the town and a volunteer program overseen by the Shaw Guild to engage visitors in Old Town and ensure they are following COVID protocols, Disero said.

She saw the ambassadors as a valued addition to the town during the pandemic. They alleviate the burden placed on bylaw officers by enabling them to "cover more ground" and they serve as "goodwill ambassadors to people that are coming into town, just to ensure that everybody's acting safe," Disero said.

Chief administrator Marlene Cluckie told councillors at a committee of the whole meeting on March 15 that "it would be great if they could help out again."

Disero expects to know by the end of the month on whether the Shaw Guild will restart the program.

Councillors are also concerned by the limited number of public washrooms that are open this early in the year, when cold snaps are still possible and prevent unwinterized washrooms from opening.

And COVID has created a perfect storm of washroom difficulties for the town. The province originally mandated that all public

facilities be closed, followed by restaurants and businesses closing their doors and bathrooms for customers. And then winter set in, closing down all of the remaining public washrooms but one near the Court House.

"That created a public health issue of a different kind," Disero told The Lake Report.

As a result, the town got permission to reopen its public washrooms. But with the cold weather, only a single washroom is available.

"And that's always been enough. But what we learned last year was, because of COVID, more people came wanting to do things outdoors," Disero said.

She said staff are considering winterizing more washrooms to accommodate the influx of early visitors.

Earlier this week the Ontario Hospital Association announced that Ontario was entering into a third wave of the pandemic, caused by increasing cases of new COVID variants combined with the original coronavirus strain.

"As always, keep your distance, wear a mask, and wash your hands," Disero advised.

"I'm hopeful that if we all stay vigilant then we will not be so severely impacted by the third wave as we were with the second. The light at the end of the tunnel is the vaccines."

New bylaw will ban drinking, BBQs in parks

Richard Harley
The Lake Report



SOURCED IMAGE

Niagara-on-the-Lake is getting a parks bylaw.

The draft bylaw, presented to the committee of the whole on Monday, is based on bylaws used by many other municipalities across the province, said director of operations Sheldon Randall.

New rules include most parks closing by 10 p.m., no drinking in parks and no fires of any kind, including cooking fires.

Coun. Clare Cameron also asked if the bylaw could be more strict on metal detect-

ing in the park by increasing the \$75 fine.

Coun. Erwin Wiens pointed out Premier Doug Ford said there's no problem with drinking in parks.

"I personally witnessed our premier last summer, so what's wrong with having

a few pops in the park," Wiens said. "And here we have a bylaw that now says (it isn't allowed)," Wiens warned councillors.

Coun. Allan Bisback raised concerns about NOTL's ongoing problem with enforcement and questioned how these new laws would be enforced, especially on busy weekends.

Randall said last summer barbecuing in parks prompted a lot of most complaints, but without a bylaw, the town couldn't enforce anything.

"Now our park staff, with this new bylaw will be able to enforce that," he said,

adding that if there was trouble, it's likely police would be called.

Wiens took issue with the ban on barbecues.

"The last thing is just on a personal note. I've never felt that having a hibachi, or a small barbecue in a park is a bad thing," he said.

He added he's talked to fire chief Nick Ruller about it and there have been no fire incidents related to barbecues.

Aside from that, he supported the bylaw.

"It's a very well written bylaw and it does give a lot of teeth for our bylaw officers."



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COVID Tracker

NOTL active cases: 8
Region active cases: 305
Region deaths: 373
Region total cases: 9,052
Region resolved cases: 8,374
Region variant cases: 119

*Mar. 17 data per Niagara Region Public Health



Contributed by Patty Garriock

"A full life is not determined by how long you live, but by how well you live."

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Editorial

Good news for NOTLers 80+ who want the vaccine

Richard Harley
 Editor-In-Chief

If you're like us, the first reaction to Niagara Region's plan for COVID-19 vaccine clinics for those over age 80 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, might have been: what the heck ...

Three clinics over a 10-day span and only 400 or so people per day getting vaccinated seemed like under-achieving.

But looking more closely, we now understand that with 1,300 folks in NOTL over age 80, those 1,200 vaccinations basically mean everyone who wants the shot should be able to get one. Many over-80s have already got their jabs in St. Catharines, so it seems the region got that

part of the plan right.

So, kudos to public health. The only amendment we'd offer is, why not do those clinics on three consecutive days and be done?

On the other hand, the region needs to improve the way it shares information and communicates.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero thinks public health officials could have done a lot better job of letting people know how the vaccine clinics will work. And we agree.

Despite the clinics being open to anyone from any municipality, the region didn't really make it clear to people until this week that you don't have to stay in your hometown to get the jab.

It would have been helpful for NOTL residents over 80 to have the information last week, or even earlier, when worries were swirling about how this rollout was going to work.

This was an oversight that may have caused unnecessary angst among residents who noticed NOTL's vaccine clinics don't start until two weeks after they began in Niagara Falls.

NOTL, of course, dutifully pays more than its fair share of taxes to the region, so it is understandable of residents to ask, "Well, what about us?"

With many retirees, this community has a large number of older folks, so when those under 80 are eligible for vaccines we

hope the region is much clearer and more informative about how it all is supposed to work.

It's commendable that public health decided to open clinics across the region so seniors wouldn't have to travel far. A win.

It looks as if NOTL is on track to have all of its 80-plus population vaccinated before mid-April. Another win.

And public health is saying that soon, pharmacies and family doctors will be able to vaccinate patients. Yet another win (once it happens).

Positive steps, finally. Meantime, we urge everyone to trust the science and get your shot at the earliest opportunity..

editor@niagaranow.com



Science should dictate vaccine decisions

Dear editor:

I am writing in response to Tom Thornton's letter, "Why opt for vaccine only 62% effective," (March 11) regarding the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Sometimes a selective presentation of data can be misleading.

The efficacy rate of a vaccine in a clinical trial does not actually predict its effectiveness in the population that is being immunized in the real world. The reason for this is quite simple: in the clinical trial there are very strict criteria for enrolment, whereas in the general population these criteria do not necessarily apply.

A recently published study in the prestigious scientific journal The Lan-

cet in the United Kingdom showed that the AstraZeneca vaccine had a real world effectiveness of 82 per cent after two doses. This led the Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) on March 16 to recommend the AstraZeneca vaccine for persons over 65 as being effective.

Furthermore, this vaccine is effective against the B.1.1.7 variant, which is becoming the predominant variant in the U.S. It is predicted that, unless immunizations accelerate, this variant will become the more dominant version and it could lead to a 64 per cent increase in deaths.

As we enter our third wave of the pandemic

in Ontario the most effective public health goal is to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible to not only prevent the original virus from spreading but the new variant as well.

If, for any reason, any of the 40 million doses of Moderna vaccine ordered by the Canadian government were to be delayed in their delivery to Canada, this would slow down our national vaccination rate. If, however, an Astra Zeneca vaccine is available, would it not make sense from a public health standpoint to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible?

If our rule is to achieve herd immunity as quickly as possible then we need to do a better job vaccinating

more people more quickly.

When recently asked which vaccine he would accept if it were offered to him, Dr. Anthony Fauci responded: "I would take the one that's offered to me."

Given that the AstraZeneca vaccine showed it was able to prevent hospitalization in 100 per cent of cases of people who are vaccinated, does it not make sense to use it if it is available?

By presenting all the facts in a clear and concise manner perhaps we can avoid maligning the politicians who are trying their best to follow the science. Should the science not dictate their decisions?

Robin Jinchereau
 Virgil

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OPINION

Conservatives secure support for **tourism**

Tony Baldinelli
Special to The Lake Report

Tourism is a major driver of the economy of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Tourists are attracted here for our scenic wine tours, our rich history, our exquisite culinary and shopping experiences, our beautifully manicured gardens and picturesque scenery. Before the onset of COVID-19, people came from around the world to enjoy all that Niagara-on-the-Lake has to offer.

Last week when I was in Ottawa, my Conservative colleagues and other opposition parties, secured the support of the House of Commons for a motion that calls on the federal government to respond to the needs and concerns of

those workers in the hardest hit sectors who have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These Canadians depend on industries like hospitality, tourism, charities, airlines, and small- and medium-sized businesses to provide for their families – and they need our support now. The simple fact is that these jobs must be saved.

For over a year, Canada's Conservatives have been calling upon the government to present a sector-specific tourism recovery plan.

Our goal in doing so, is to secure jobs, pensions, and to quicken Canada's economic recovery by helping these heavily impacted sectors and their workers. We cannot allow the pandemic to permanently erase these

important jobs. We know that these jobs matter and they are vital to our national economic future.

Disappointingly, the Trudeau government voted against this motion. Despite the Liberals' resistance, I am thankful my colleagues in the NDP and Bloc Quebecois understand its importance, and frankly, this motion should have been accepted unanimously by all parties.

Throughout this pandemic, Canadians have been let down by this government. Whether it was their failure to get Canadians their vaccines in a timely manner, their overt scandalous behaviour, or their brazen move to prorogue Parliament in the middle of a pandemic of historic pro-

portions, Canadians deserve far better from their federal government.

As your MP, I was pleased to second this motion because I knew it was supporting the best interests of our riding. I understand how important tourism is for our local community, especially having worked in this sector with the Niagara Parks Commission for 18 years before I was elected in October 2019.

With your continued support, I will continue to proudly represent you and raise the issues of importance to the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie.

Tony Baldinelli is the Conservative member of Parliament for Niagara Falls riding.

Seniors **conflicted** on AstraZeneca vaccine

Dear editor:

Thousands of Canadian seniors over the age of 65, typically the more cautious sector of the population, are conflicted over the use of the COVID-19 vaccine from AstraZeneca.

As close to 20 countries worldwide pause its use, Canada in recent days has been swift to do a U-turn and approve it for seniors over 65. Was this, they ask, a political rather than a pure scientific decision and influenced in large part by the lack of vaccine deliveries here in Canada?

In a similar manner they professed to the provinces extending the medical professionals' recommended time between the first and the second shot, from two to three weeks out to three months and now four months. It seems to be a real shotgun reaction to lack of supply and the rush to extend vaccines to as many residents as possible.

Question: Will Dr. Mustafa Hirji and his team members, and Sean Simpson, for example, representing the pharmacy section, strongly advocate for vaccines, other

than AstraZeneca?

There appears to be an inordinate amount of political influence on these conflicting guidelines, both from the scientific and pharmaceutical manufacturing world. Perhaps it is a self-preservation reaction on billions of dollars in research grants from their respective governments.

As a consequence of these conflicting signals, seniors in large numbers will refuse the AstraZeneca vaccine. They are scared with all the reports out of

Europe about blood clots and deaths. We need a world spokesperson who will speak with one authoritative voice on these matters.

Not Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Premier Doug Ford or Ret. Gen. Rick Hillier, who all have a vested interest in creating a diversion away from their collective vaccine rollout fiasco. Left to them, they will next be recommending we get a flu shot every two years.

*Samuel Young
NOTL*

American in NOTL **left behind** with vaccine rollout

Dear editor:

My wife is 81. She is Canadian and just made an appointment for the vaccine.

She also tried to make the same for me, age 83, but failed

because I am American.

I am here because she is being treated for cancer. I will remain until the treatments are complete.

We are not in Florida,

where we live part-time. Meanwhile, my friends in Florida have indicated that Canadians have travelled to Florida to receive their vaccination.

So, where is the reciprocity? I cannot go over the border since it is closed for automobile travel.

*Ralph Dangelmaier
NOTL*

Dog owners leaving **poop bags** all over golf course

Dear editor:

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Course has come through the winter in perfect condition. We now have staff in and have begun to get things ready for opening day.

However, something we have been seeing out on the course this year is not good.

I mentioned this last year and, to be honest, it's way worse this year.

People are picking up there dog poop but leaving the little bags all over the golf course. Many bags have just been left behind and, in some cases, people have been throwing them

over our new fence at the shop and their bags end up on cart roofs.

People have to remember that this is not a dog park – it's a golf course. If this keeps up we will seriously think about not allowing dogs any more.

I hate saying that but it's

not acceptable to just throw your dog bags anywhere out there.

It's a pretty nice place to walk and let your dogs play. Please pick up after your pet and properly dispose of it.

*Mike Magwood
Superintendent
NOTL Golf Club*

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How folks are managing **one year** into the pandemic

Brittney Cutler
Special to The Lake Report

It's now been a year since the coronavirus hit and changed life as we all knew it.

For many in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the COVID-19 pandemic has meant tough times as they coped with lost business, repeated lockdowns and #stayhome orders.

Kathryn Hoshkiw feels lucky. The mother of two has weathered the pandemic well and is happy that her kids are excelling with their online studies.

"They can easily access their professors, the live classes are at great hours, they've taken the time to join clubs, groups and participate virtually," Hoshkiw says.

She thinks her children will feel more prepared once they get back on campus because they took this year to work out a routine for when and how to get work done without being stressed and still have time for leisure at home.

As for Hoshkiw's occupation, she works from home all winter as a farm consul-



Amy Post, Isaac Post, Robin Post and Colin Post prioritize family time during COVID. SUPPLIED

tant and researcher.

"The only way it (the pandemic) affected me was income slightly because I gave up consulting at some northern farms last year, so I would not have to stay with my mother when in that area," she says.

"I didn't want to risk her health on the off-chance I became infected unknowingly," Hoshkiw says. "And research opportunities were down considerably, which is the bulk of my income, but we managed."

Former town councillor Paolo Miele, a father of three, says the pandemic hasn't been easy for his family.

"We have been staying at home. My oldest daughter has done her second year of university at home, my other daughter has been in and out of Grade 12, and our youngest has been online for Grade 4," Miele says. "My wife has been running our household and has been the glue for our family."

He looks forward to a return to normalcy.

"Honestly, within the next couple of months, once the vaccines have rolled out to the residents and to the rest of Canada, we are going to slowly get back to normal," says Miele.

He anticipates that by the

end of this year, if not this summer, we'll be able to move around more freely.

Another mother, Amy Post, says her family has been very lucky, but it hasn't been without its hiccups.

"I used to work for NOTL for Vintage Hotels, as a contract worker, doing the floral and decor work around town. It was announced (last year) on March 17 that we no longer were needed as the hotels would be closing for a while," Post says.

Her husband, Colin, a tech teacher, has been stressed from changing from in-class to online classes. As well, he has dealt with a chronic, non-COVID cough since August.

Post says that for the time being at home, her two kids have been doing house work to keep busy and helped her husband renovate their basement, which flooded in January. But taking time for family is also really important.

"We take more time now to spend time with each other, keeping life simpler," says Post. "I hope people are able to slow down a bit

and take time to enjoy what they've got, but we are fortunate and had no hardships staying home."

After a year of living with the pandemic, the biggest surprise was that she "wasn't going back to my hotel work. I loved my team and I miss our adventures," says Post.

A year ago if anyone had suggested this pandemic year was coming, "I wouldn't have believed it."

Lord Mayor Betty Disero says NOTL residents have been very supportive of all the measures taken by the town over the past year.

"The citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake have been exemplary. Their diligence to stay safe and to keep people around them safe, they have done everything they can including helping the town," says Disero.

"There has been an overwhelming amount of support for each other and, in that regard, it has brought the community a little closer together."

Disero says the pandemic has had a devastating effect on the local economy particularly the wine industry

and tourism.

As mayor during this unprecedented year, she says she faced a lot of hard decisions and that has been tough on her personally.

"The stress of how to make the town a safer place for all our citizens has been something with me for a year now," she says.

She focused on communication and trying to "give people information that will help them make decisions during this COVID-19 period and trying to ensure that the information that goes out to the public is accurate," says Disero.

"Although the complete reopening will be different than what it was before, we may have to continue wearing masks for a longer period of time," she says. "I believe our economy will come back. It will be slow, but it will come back."

HOW ARE YOU COPING?: Let us know how you are adapting to life after 12 months of COVID-19. What are you doing differently? How has it affected your life? Email editor@niagaranow.com



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Museum lecture looks at **Queenston Quarry**

Barbara Worthy
Special to The Lake Report



The Queenston Quarry cement works. SUPPLIED/NOTL MUSEUM

The NOTL Museum's virtual lecture series continues March 24 with Frank Racioppo's presentation, "The Queenston Quarry."

His lecture promises to unlock the secrets of this magnificent site overlooking the Niagara Peninsula, where ancient geological forces and retreating glaciers gave rise to the extraordinary biosphere of the Niagara Escarpment.

The Queenston Quarry is home to natural, geological and cultural resources that provide a rich historical significance to the land. Racioppo will present an in-depth look at this diversity and productivity, as well as its Indigenous and settler history.

The rehabilitation of the quarry provides a unique parallel into the history and evolution of Upper Canada. The lands fell under the auspices of the 1764 Treaty of Niagara, which reserved land along the Niagara

River for military use.

But an influx of Loyalists gradually saw the growth of early settlements and, eventually, an agricultural plan was established, which included the quarry site.

From the day in 1837 when stonecutter John Brown removed the first large cut stones from the quarry, and railroads criss-crossed the Escarpment, this site has symbolized growth, productivity and industrial development.

Queenston stone has been prized by masons, builders and architects for some of Canada's most important and monumental buildings. Racioppo will highlight the journey of this historic limestone.

Racioppo is a real estate lawyer, founder and co-owner of the Queenston Quarry Reclamation project.

"The quarry's next era is designed to capture and embrace its natural and cultural richness," he says. "We

are creating a sense of place that is a totally unique residential and recreational experience. And will always honour its history and its beauty."

So join the NOTL Museum on Wednesday, March 24 at 11 a.m. and discover more about the bold and beautiful Queenston Quarry.

Registration is required: www.nhsm.ca/events. For more info email: aklassen@nhsm.ca.

Lots going on as RiverBrink **gears for spring**

Colin Brezicki
Special to The Lake Report



RiverBrink Art Museum. FILE PHOTO

Spring is upon us and RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston has much going on for art lovers and those who would like to expand their knowledge and explore their own creativity.

As a volunteer I miss spending time in Samuel Weir's former residence, with its extensive collection of paintings, books and artefacts generously bequeathed to the community on his death in 1981.

I look forward to when I can return in person. Director/curator Debra Antoncic and programming and curatorial assistant Sonya de Lazzer are also looking forward to welcoming visitors to the gallery.

A date and details for the spring opening reception will be announced soon. They are excited to host the exhibition "Power," a video and audio installation by artist Elizabeth Chitty, opening April 22.

In the meantime, programming continues via Zoom. Art historian Penny-Lynn Cookson's lecture series, "Art and Revolution – From Cave Art to the Future," follows the evolutionary path of artistic creativity from hunter/gatherers to the rise and fall of empires to the robots of the future.

Having attended her fascinating presentations on Caravaggio and Leonardo in the past I can personally attest to her knowledge, clarity and compelling visuals. The series runs on Thursdays from now through April 29.

Another online event is "Coffee with the Curator," held on the second Friday of each month. In this month's session, director/curator Debra Antoncic guided Zoom guests on a tour of the current exhibition "Oh, the places you'll go," featuring water colours of an array of destinations from Georgian Bay to Jamaica to the port cities of Liverpool and Marseilles. Previous sessions of "Coffee with the Curator" are available on YouTube. Just follow the link on the RiverBrink website.

Information about past

and future exhibitions, including "Centre and Periphery: Group of Seven, Canadian Impressionism" and "Botanicals" can also be found on the website.

The site also provides details of "RiverBrink Reads," virtual discussions of art-related books, and "Film Screenings," a four-week series celebrating Canadian women who made a difference in the arts, politics and medicine.

And hopefully before long de Lazzer will be conducting her yoga classes in the beautiful gardens overlooking the river.

There's lots going on at RiverBrink during COVID and much more will happen when restrictions are eased. Stay tuned for further announcements and visit www.riverbrink.org for information about membership and details of our events.

Colin Brezicki is a member and volunteer at RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston.



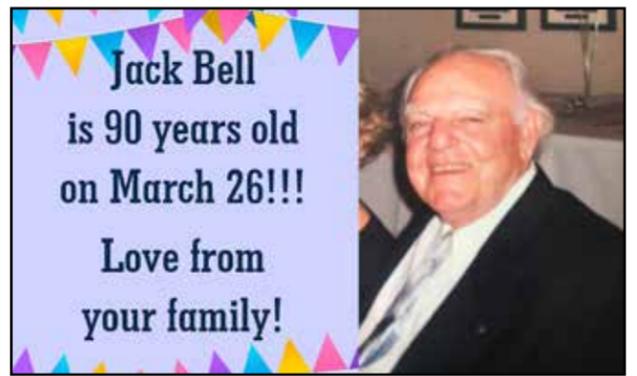
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Left: Keanan Heil, 21, from Beamsville, receives his Pfizer vaccine on Monday at the Niagara Regional Native Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Top right: Traditional Indigenous medicines used for smudging were available. Middle right: People wait distanced after getting their vaccines. Bottom Right: Mary English gets her vaccine. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS

Indigenous community receives **vaccinations**

Continued from Front Page

Fort Erie's native centre had already had two clinics and Monday's in Niagara-on-the-Lake was the third for the Indigenous community in the region.

Organizing something on such a massive scale is not something the native centres are used to or prepared for, Dockstader said.

"The Fort Erie Friendship Centre shut off their phones on Monday, and from Monday until Friday night last week, our phones were rendered useless.

People could barely get through to get service."

"It's just not what we're

equipped to do," he says, but "we did it."

"The idea that we can have a clinic like this is exactly the type of action that it takes to build the trust that needs to happen."

KARL DOCKSTADER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NIAGARA REGIONAL NATIVE CENTRE

The clinic attracted Indigenous vaccine-seekers from various regions,

including Hamilton and Beamsville, though Dockstader said most people came from Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, "but we have a few people from Niagara-on-the-Lake here."

Dockstader said he's appreciative of the region's decision to prioritize vaccines for the Indigenous community.

"Niagara Region public health has been amazing to work with. They're consummate professionals. Where we've had questions, they've been very quick with answers and I'm really happy about that," he said.

"Sometimes Indigenous people have been skeptical because of the history of health care providers and Indigenous people, whether it's nutrition experiments or the forced sterilization of our women, or whether it's the stereotyping that sometimes happens with medical professionals," he said.

"So the idea that we can have a clinic like this is exactly the type of action that it takes to build the trust that needs to happen."

Some members of the Indigenous community have been skeptical about why they are at the front of the line for vaccinations,

Dockstader said.

That grew out of the "historical mistrust, but I actually think that this is an act of goodwill," he said, adding there are medical reasons to address Indigenous people first.

"Unfortunately Indigenous people are over-represented in diabetes and high blood pressure and general comorbidities. But I also think it's the most fair and equitable thing to do."

"There was no script for this, for us or for public health. But the Friendship Centre has been working in community for over 40 years, and public health has been doing what they

do for a long time, and I hope this is the first of many partnerships we have with them."

Dockstader, who is under 55, was on a backup list for vaccines, and was able to get his Monday as well. He waited until the end of the day to make sure everyone else got theirs.

"I am the leader here, and my teaching is that leaders go last. So we make sure everyone's taken care of and then after, if there's enough and if public health deems it appropriate, then I'll get vaccinated today," he said before he knew if he'd be getting his shot.



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Court House floor replaced

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Chris Allen sent in these photos of construction work at the Court House's Market Room on Queen Street.

The floor is being replaced as part of the 2020 capital budget, with cement poured on Wednesday, said Kevin Turcotte, the town's manager of parks and recreation.

Flooring should be done a couple of weeks after the concrete cures.



NOTLer glad to be back at the gym

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Former Canadian Olympic swimmer Elaine Tanner is happy to have somewhere to go get some exercise again.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre opened its doors again Monday, with a maximum of 10 people at once allowed to use its track and fitness facilities, by appointment only.

Tanner was one of the only people in the building Tuesday afternoon, working out on the elliptical machine.

She said it's a big positive for the community, not just for physical health, but also for mental health.

"I've missed it so much," she said. "It's such a great emotional outlet for people. And with COVID you want to keep healthy and keep your weight down because people will sit around in the house and eat. And you don't want to do that."

Tanner, 70, was nicknamed "Mighty Mouse" for her exploits in the pool



Elaine Tanner uses the elliptical at the community centre on Tuesday. RICHARD HARLEY

and won three swimming medals at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

She said it "feels like a decade" since the centre closed and she was unable to visit the gym.

Monday's opening went well, said NOTL's manager of parks and recreation Kevin Turcotte.

"Everybody kind of was learning about the new process and everybody was

just thankful that we were open," he said.

With the new rules changing, showers and lockers are closed, he said. Just bathrooms remain open.

People also have to enter and exit in separate areas and staff is sanitizing equipment regularly. Equipment is also spaced three metres apart.

The track has been moved to the auditorium, marked

with orange rope and chairs.

Turcotte said about 50 people used the facilities on the first day of reopening.

"With the weather turning a little bit nicer, people are looking to kind of get ready to be able to go walking outside or some people are just used to using this facility," he said.

"It's part of their daily routine and when it comes available, that's great."

\$1M grant will help Shaw stage summer shows

Gail Kendall
Special to The Lake Report

The nearly \$1-million grant the Shaw Festival is receiving from the provincial government will be used to help staff and performers prepare for the 2021 season – though exactly what this year's shows will look like is unknown at the moment.

Executive director Tim Jennings says the Shaw is grateful for the \$999,593 it is receiving as part of \$25 million in COVID-related funding the government is giving to arts organizations across the province.

The Shaw, which has already been forced to cancel "Gypsy," a major production that was held over from last year's cancelled season, hopes the money will keep artists and behind-the-scenes staff working on outdoor and other productions this season.



Olivia Sinclair-Brisbane with Andrew Broderick. PETER ANDREW LUSZTYK

If indoor shows are able to resume, theatre capacity is expected to be substantially reduced. Meanwhile, Jennings said the company is preparing to hold more outdoor shows this year in various venues and will work with the existing relationships built with some wineries when the Shaw staged its concert series last year.

Many of the performers

from 2020 will be returning, but last year's lost season and ongoing COVID concerns have prompted some people to change direction and find work elsewhere, and others are expanding their families, he said.

Both Jennings and Lord Mayor Betty Disero said the provincial grant recognizes the role the Shaw and Niagara-on-the-Lake play in attracting visitors

and boosting the region's economy.

Jennings noted that with the impact of COVID on people's mental health, the importance of the arts "on the health and well-being of the community has never been made clearer. The arts is a reflection of society around us."

In announcing the contribution, tourism and culture minister Lisa MacLeod acknowledged, "Arts organizations make an important contribution to our province, providing thousands of jobs for musicians, writers, painters, actors, dancers, stagehands and the many others working behind the scenes."

"Providing the help they need is a critical part of our plan to support individuals, families and job creators impacted by the virus, while laying the foundation for a strong economic recovery."



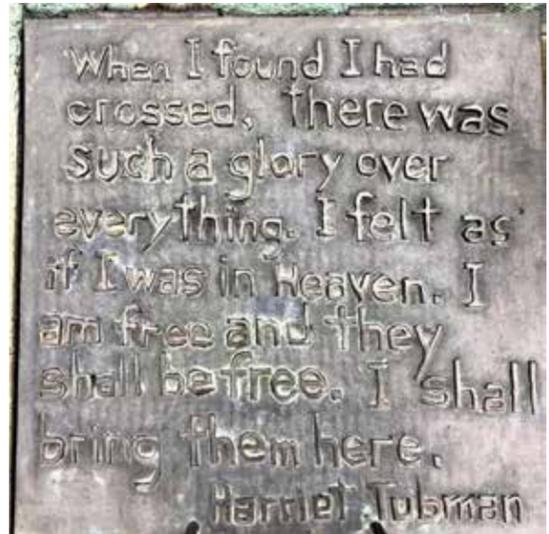
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Barbara Ahluwalia shows off her latest community project. The small monument in front of Parliament Oak school commemorates the families who helped runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad. She wants to make sure the monument is saved when the school property is redeveloped. TIM TAYLOR PHOTOS



Left: The inscription on the Parliament Oak monument quotes famous American abolitionist Harriet Tubman. Tubman lived for a short period on North Street in St. Catharines. Right: Barbara Ahluwalia.

Committed to the

Continued from Front Page

memorate the spirit of the families who helped secure the safety of slaves escaping from the Deep South on the Underground Railroad.

When the summer installation ended, Parliament Oak school was chosen as the site for the permanent presentation of one of the monuments. The remainder are along the banks of Niagara River in western New York.

Parliament Oak was considered the perfect spot for the little monument, having been the historic site of the signing of the Emancipation Compromise of 1783, an act to severely limit slavery in Upper Canada.

"Very few people in town seem to know it's there," she says.

Ahluwalia is worried the new developer might not understand the value of the monument to the community. She wants it moved to Voices of Freedom Park, which opened in 2018 at Regent and Johnson streets.

"I've spoken to quite a few people about having it moved," she says. "I just don't want to lose it with the redevelopment of the school property."

Find it a new home at Voices of FreedomPark "would be absolutely perfect."

Ahluwalia was 16 when she left her family home in Lancashire, once the

centre of the northwest England cotton milling industry, to start a nursing career.

Her father had served in the First World War. "When he came out, he got a job on the railway," Ahluwalia remembers. "He played golf until he got married and had four kids. My parents went through two wars and the Depression. We always said — and still do — 'don't waste.'"

"My mother was very handy. She could do anything. I learned to knit a very early age. You never had empty hands in our house."

She describes her youth as happy and carefree. "We were as free as birds in those days."

"I can't say I was a brilliant student. A friend of mine down the road was going to go for an interview at a hospital in Manchester, so a couple of us went along. 'Elsie's going, why don't we go with her?' So, the three of us all tooted off on the bus to Manchester."

By 1954, Ahluwalia received her nursing accreditation and by the late 1950s she had done the medical rounds in middle England and was looking for more. Once again, her wanderlust took hold.

"I had a nursing friend in Nairobi. 'Oh well,' I said, 'I'll just go out to Africa.' So, I did."

It was at the Aga Khan Hospital

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Mike Shatkosky
Owner



American abolitionist, Harriet Tubman, who helped rescue hundreds of enslaved people, using the Underground Railroad. Barbara Ahluwalia is an avid golfer and got in some early practice last week at NOTL Golf Club. JANICE WHITE PHOTO

The past and future of NOTL

Nairobi that Ahluwalia met her soon-to-be husband, Ranjit Ahluwalia, a new doctor in the same hospital.

They married in 1961, heading off to Edinburgh so Ranjit could certify in tropical medicine. But when they were ready to return to Kenya, the country was politically unstable in the aftermath of winning its independence.

“With three small children, we decided to go elsewhere. And ended up here in NOTL in November 1967.

“We didn’t choose Niagara, it chose us. Ranjit was offered a position at the local medical centre, on Niagara Stone Road. We hadn’t a clue where we were going. And here we are.”

Two of the couple’s five children were born in Niagara. All five have long since spread their wings, landing in Spain, England, Ohio, Wisconsin and California. Three have followed their parents’ career paths into the medical field.

Like many families, they Zoom from around the world, every Sunday afternoon.

Barbara Ahluwalia is a living testimony to Benjamin Franklin’s statement: “If you want to get something done, ask a busy person.”

In the early 1970s, she was the first president of the new Niagara nursery school, “but only until my kids left.” The school was in Harmony

Hall, a makeshift community centre in a Quonset hut in Chautauqua.

By the mid-’70s she was regularly winning tennis events at the fledgling Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club. In 1974, when Ahluwalia and Sue Fast won the women’s doubles, the annual dues for the club were \$8.

“We weren’t very well organized. It was a bit loosey goosey. Like a lot of things in Niagara-on-the-Lake in those days.”

Ahluwalia hasn’t played tennis for almost 40 years. Rheumatoid arthritis forced her off the courts.

And on to the golf course.

“Ranjit played golf. We both took lessons.” And although she is not playing as much these days, she still relishes the time with her Tuesday 18-hole ladies’ group. Not content with playing the game, she became a member of the club’s board of directors and the chair.

By the late 1980s, Ahluwalia was helping out and displaying dried flowers at what is now the Niagara Pump-house Arts Centre, along the banks of the Niagara River, just upstream from the sailing club.

She joined the movement to transform the circa-1891 heritage industrial building into an art gallery and studio, served on the board of directors and became the Pump-house’s first fundraising chair. It officially opened

in 1990.

“I think our first goal was \$80,000. We raised a hundred,” she recalls.

“In those days I knew a lot of people. The Virgil Businessmen helped a lot. A lot of it was small donations from people in town.”

And to further demonstrate she was a busy person, she also served seven years on the library board and 16 years with Newark Neighbours.

She seems to bristle a bit when asked how she thinks the town is faring now.

“We’re certainly losing the small-town feel,” she says almost wistfully.

In the early ‘70s, Ahluwalia attended a community meeting about an important local issue. The group was told the town must not kill the goose that lays the golden egg. The topic was parking.

“Fifty years ago! And it is still not solved. We’ve reached a saturation point. The goose is dying and the egg is badly cracked. The tourists are controlling us.”

Back to her most recent community passion.

Ahluwalia has contacted all the right people, looking for support to have the Parliament Oak monument saved and moved – so far without success.

“We have to save it.” Part promise and part plea.

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Residents can book vaccines in **any** municipality

Continued from Front Page

The schedule and number of clinics matches the vaccine supply the region is receiving, Niagara medical officer of health Dr. Mustafa Hirji told a media conference Monday.

Meanwhile, as of Tuesday, COVID-19 cases in Niagara-on-the-Lake had fallen to six from nine patients a week ago. The region had 305 people with COVID and had identified a total of 119 variant cases.

Niagara Region public health spokesperson Courtney Westerhof said Niagara's clinic schedule was "based on a number of factors, including availability of locations, space sizes, the finalization of contracts and staffing."

"Not every municipality can be first and so we tried to rotate through different parts of Niagara with our schedule," she said, adding that the region is working "as quickly as possible to get the vaccines we receive into as many people's arms as possible."

"We appreciate the eagerness so many people have to get the vaccine. Residents are welcome to book an appointment at a clinic anywhere in Niagara, not just those in their municipality."

People looking to book a vaccine can do so anywhere in the province and are not limited to their own municipality, or even region, Hirji said.

While Niagara-on-the-Lake has a high proportion of seniors, its actual 80-plus population is much less than St. Catharines, Welland or Niagara Falls, he said.

The number of NOTL clinics is "based on how large the 80-plus population is in absolute numbers in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and three clinics was the appropriate number to hold there," Hirji said.

The other detail, he said, is different clinics' sites have different capacities.

"A larger space allows us to vaccinate more people and so somewhere like Niagara-on-the-Lake actually has a larger space than Lincoln does, or than Wainfleet does. So three clinics there actu-



Lord Mayor Betty Disero is confident NOTL's 80-plus population that wants a vaccine will receive one. RICHARD HARLEY

ally is proportionally much more than some of those other communities would have."

Hirji said based on census data from 2019, there are about 28,000 people over the age of 80 in Niagara, about 20,000 of whom are not in long-term care homes and will be new to receiving the vaccine.

The region's first clinic in Niagara Falls was fully booked by noon Monday, Hirji said, and a total of 3,600 people had already signed up.

Through Niagara Health, which has been booking people into clinics and administering vaccines to hospital patients who are well enough to receive one, another 4,000 people in the 80-plus age bracket were scheduled to get their vaccines, meaning about 58 per cent of NOTL's senior population had either received a vaccine or been booked for one as of Monday afternoon.

In all, there are 11 sites for vaccine clinics in Niagara, which Hirji said was done to make sure elderly people could access the vaccine without having to travel across the region.

"It's really important that we rotate it to all 11 sites

because we know it may be difficult for some of our elderly to travel across Niagara, and so we wanted to make sure that there was at least one local option for everybody, wherever they might live, so they have an opportunity to get to a clinic without too much difficulty," Hirji said.

"The schedule we have here when combined with the work that Niagara Health is going to be doing at their clinic will really use up all the vaccine we receive during this period."

Hirji said it won't get to a point where the clinics are operating daily.

"Unfortunately given the just sheer number of clinics, we're not able to do that. I look at a place like Toronto, which is planning to actually only have at most nine clinics total, and they're only launching three clinics at the end of this month because that's all their capacity is able to manage," Hirji said.

"We're maybe eight or nine times smaller than Toronto in terms of our capacity, so we're not going to be able to sustain 11 full clinics," he said.

However, it's likely there will end up being two or three running per day, he

said, and that probably would include one large clinic and then maybe a couple of smaller clinics in other locations.

In April, he hopes pharmacies and primary care physicians will also be able to give vaccines.

Disero said she understands the region's goal of making sure there's a clinic in all municipalities, but thinks public health could have done a better job letting people know they don't have to go to the clinics in their own municipality, she told The Lake Report.

"I mean we've been trying to supplement it as much as we can with videos and media releases and stuff like that, but I really think there could have been, or there could be, more communication," she said.

However, she said she has high hopes the three days will be enough to vaccinate everyone over 80 in NOTL who wants a shot.

She noted vaccines have already been given out to many NOTL residents over 80 who are patients of the Niagara North Family Health. The vaccines were given at a clinic at Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre

in St. Catharines.

"Everybody wanted to be first and I wish that we had started sooner. However, what they did do for us in Niagara-on-the-Lake was the doctors last week started calling people over from their patient rosters."

She said she saw several NOTLers getting vaccines when she took her mother to get hers.

"It was like Niagara-on-the-Lake had invaded Seymour-Hannah," she said. "So we've had quite a few people over 80 getting their vaccine."

Her hopes are also high that pharmacies will soon have a vaccine supply.

"It's all about supply," she said. "I truly believe in my heart of hearts that Niagara Region's ready. If we can get the supply, we can get it out quickly."

The region held vaccine clinics at the Fort Erie Friendship Centre last week as part of its effort to prioritize Indigenous community members.

During those first clinics in Fort Erie, the region ran into "many small hiccups," Hirji said.

"And then the second day we were able to iron that out and actually had a much smoother clinic experience," he said, adding the plan is to learn the same over multiple days at each of the locations.

"We'll be able to optimize these clinics for those later days and make sure we're running at full steam whenever we get around to the next rotation through all of these locations," Hirji said.

Hirji is recommending everyone eligible who would like a vaccine to register as soon as possible.

"As well, I remind everyone, vaccinated or not, that we need to keep up our other efforts because COVID-19 is unfortunately on the rise once again. For just a couple more months, let's stay home as much as possible, keep our distance when we do go out, and continue wearing our face coverings and washing our hands."

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:
A green photo health card will be required to make an appointment. Both numbers on the front and back of the card are required. Expired green health cards will be accepted. Anyone who still has a red and white health card, or who requires assistance with booking, can call the vaccine information line.

Public health is advising wait times are likely, both online and by phone.

Those receiving vaccines can bring one essential caregiver with them to their appointment.

Once an appointment is booked, on the day of their appointment residents will need the booking confirmation number or QR code from the provincial booking portal, their health card, a mask and to wear a loose fitting top or T-shirt.

Those with appointments should arrive at least five minutes early. If residents arrive earlier, public health asks that they wait in their car until five minutes prior to their appointment time.

Niagara Region transit, including NRT OnDemand in NOTL, is also offering free rides to and from COVID-19 vaccinations, for both clinic and pharmacy vaccinations.



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Artist drops painting for **Art and Found Day**

Jessalyn Duguay
Special to The Lake Report

If you were out and about last weekend and happened to stumble upon a wrapped-up package, with a note asking for you to take it home with you, then you witnessed a global movement at work.

On Friday, March 12, more than 400 artists across 32 countries participated in Art and Found Day, executing a worldwide plan to take their original art, wrap it up and leave it somewhere public.

The reason? To promote local artists' work, to help get original art into more homes – and also to just spread joy.

Fort Erie artist Elaine Bryck left some of her work on a bench on Queen Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Bryck dropped three packages on Friday, two in



A package sits on bench outside Brims and Things on Queen Street. JESSALYN DUGUAY

Niagara-on-the-Lake right across the street from each other – one outside Brims & Things and the other on a bench outside Cows ice cream shop.

Inside one package was a small, colourful abstract painting done in ink on yupo paper and a handmade card from the artist with an explanation of why the package was left.

"I hope you enjoy it and I hope it makes you smile. Have a great day and stay safe!" the letter says.

Bryck retired almost 13

years ago and has used her extra time to really throw herself into her love of creating art. She has been doing her own art-drops on a near-monthly basis for the past almost two years, so the decision to participate in Art and Found just made sense to her, she said.

"If you can give back to the community that supports you and just make someone's day, why wouldn't you?" Bryck said.

Art and Found founder Courtney Senior says the concept can give people

stories to share for years to come.

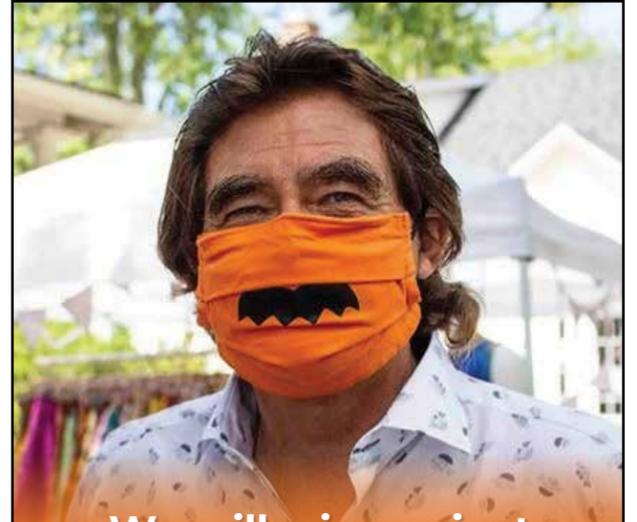
"One artist left an art package outside a hospital and the couple who found it had just had a baby," she said in an interview.

"When they got home, they opened the package and were so happy. It was a picture of a crab and their baby's room was decorated in an ocean theme. It was kismet."

Senior started the movement six years ago in Toronto, when she decided to give her art away before she began selling.

"I wanted to get my work out there but was intimidated. So, I decided one day, I'll just put it on the street and hopefully someone finds it and likes it," Senior said.

A list of artists around the globe who participated can be found at courtseniorcreative.com/artandfoundday.



We will win against COVID – keep wearing your mask and checking in on loved ones

Wayne Gates

MPP Niagara Falls riding representing Niagara-on-the-Lake

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Photo courtesy of Richard Harley

Ross' Ravings: Let's take the **NO** out of NOTL

Ross Robinson
Special to The Lake Report

Yes and No.

These two simple words are ubiquitous in our lives. They can be a subtle way of changing the mood, the attitude and the tone of a conversation or interaction.

But here in NOTL, let's think about exchanging the word No with Yes, or at least Please. We could be so much more welcoming and warm on Queen Street, to passersby on our sidewalks.

Our universal fight to stop the spread of COVID-19 during the global pandemic, is far from over. Most of us are doing our best to observe the protocols, to stay healthy and protect others. If we carefully and wisely craft our messaging, so much can be accomplished. At no extra cost and to great advantage.

Back in 2002, we were enjoying a family vacation in Florida. Remember vacations? At Busch Gardens in Tampa, we arrived at one attraction and were confronted by a sign, "No Admittance, Construction. Danger."

Two days later, at Disney



"No" signs around town. SUPPLIED

World near Orlando, we arrived at an attraction and were confronted by a similar sign, but it read: "We Are Working Hard To Make Your Next Visit Even More Magical. Have a Happy Day and Come Back Soon."

So much can be done with the right words and attitude.

Now, back to NOTL. Last Saturday evening, as three bubble friends and I enjoyed our regular masked, physically distanced and handwashed stroll around town, we noticed the nega-

tive tone.

Taped to shop doors and restaurant windows, signs read: No Smoking. No Vaping, No Public Washrooms. No Mask – No Entry.

(How about, Please wear a mask.) No more than 6 allowed in store. (How about, "Maximum 6 allowed in store. Thank You.) Do You Have Any of the Following Symptoms? Crimestoppers. Face Covering Required. Closed.

The Queenston Golf Course is arguably the best golf value in Canada, along

with NOTL Sports Wall of Famer Jack Lowrey's other course in St. Davids. Perhaps they could soften up the sign by the path to the Pro Shop, which reads, "Leave Promptly After Your Round."

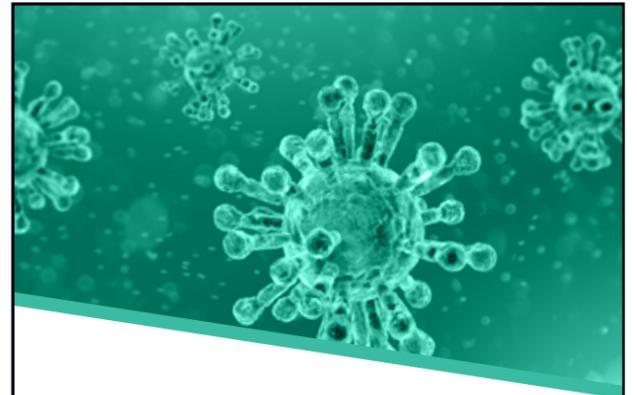
Yes, yer humble scribbler understands the need to remind people to obey the COVID-19 protocols. But let's be creative and find ways to be welcoming and warm. Our locals and visitors will pick up on the vibe and feel better about life in general.

Now, I have been working on a way to finish this "Less NO in NOTL" story with a memorable ending. I can't quite get it, but want to try. How about adding a "C" after the TL in NOTL?" That would give us TLC. Tender Loving Care.

A bit awkward, but I was determined to squeeze it into this fun little story for The Lake Report.

Let's stay the course as we fight COVID-19. Niagara-on-the-Lake is warming up, the days are longer, and the birds are chirpily singing that spring is coming.

We are so fortunate to live in Canada ... in 2021.



Public Health keeps you informed.

For COVID-19 vaccine information visit niagararegion.ca/covid19

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Celebrating St. Patrick's Day

Top: Shauna Dickson, Jenna Gatsby and Ricky Watson celebrate St. Paddy's Day with some food and beers at The Irish Harp Pub. Left: Nicole and Mike DiCienzo dressed in their greens, enjoying the patio. Right: Tonde Wirth and Matt Hurlburt in their St. Paddy's hats. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS

Pumphouse **welcomes** people back

Aimee Medina
Special to The Lake Report

The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre has reopened to the public and everyone is welcome to visit the art exhibitions on display.

The Joyner Gallery features the artworks of the arts centre's talented instructors. Adorning the walls of the Walker Room Gallery are stunning pieces made by its talented members. The Instructors' Exhibition and Members' Show are available for viewing through a virtual tour by visiting the Pumphouse website.

Although its doors are now open, virtual programming continues. Online classes, lectures and workshops for students of all ages and skill levels, and of various mediums are being offered. Thanks to a Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, some of the online courses are free to the public.

The Founders' Continuing Arts Program, aimed at enriching the lives of our elderly community, has



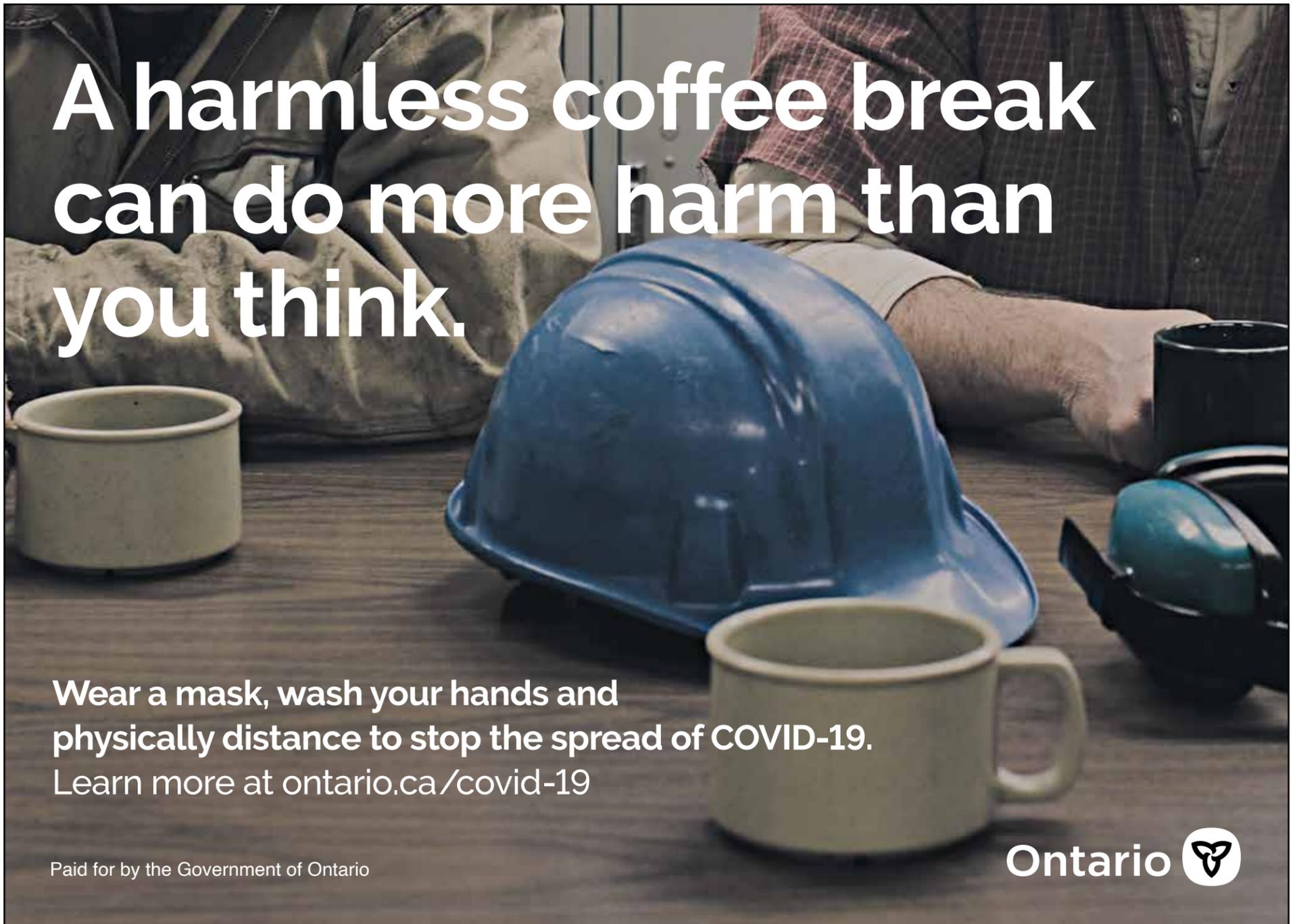
The Niagara Pumphouse is welcoming visitors back in a limited capacity. FILE PHOTO/JESSICA MAXWELL

also been converted into a virtual format as well. According to the arts centre's director, Rima Boles, "We believe the arts are essential to human development and the well-being of society. Now more than ever programming like (the Founders' program) is important, which was recognized and made possible through the generosity and support of Niagara Recycling."

Along with an easy-to-follow video that can be

streamed any time, art-making kits required for the projects are supplied and delivered curb-side for the residents of Upper Canada Lodge in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The capacity in the gallery is limited and face masks are mandatory for all guests. The centre's hours are Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit niagara-pumphouse.ca to plan your visit.



A harmless coffee break can do more harm than you think.

Wear a mask, wash your hands and physically distance to stop the spread of COVID-19.
Learn more at ontario.ca/covid-19

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Firefighters

NOTL Pandemic Heroes



Teachers



Front-line workers

The Lake Report wants to help recognize NOTL's Pandemic Heroes — people who have made a difference, big or small, in a positive way. You can help us recognize someone in the community by sending a bit about the person and why they're a Pandemic Hero. Please send your nominations early to editor@niagaranow.com. A special thanks to Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery for providing a bottle of sparkling wine to each of our pandemic heroes. That's the spirit!

Sheldon Randall

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's director of operations, Sheldon Randall, who was recently honoured for 25 years of service to the town, is one of NOTL's pandemic heroes.

Randall, who started at the town in 1996 and worked his way up to operations manager, has stepped in on multiple occasions to lead the town administration when needed.

Most recently in 2020, as interim chief administrator, Randall helped lead the town through the first nine months of the global pandemic, working virtually around the clock and adapting to a rapidly changing situation. He and the lord mayor were given emergency powers by council to make decisions in the best interests of the town and Randall used his experience to help ensure NOTL responded wisely to the pandemic.

During a Feb. 22 meeting of council, Lord Mayor Betty Disero praised Randall's role in guiding the town's pandemic response.

"For the first nine months of this COVID-19 pandemic, he tirelessly guided the emergency control group, working hard and pretty well all day, every day to steer our ship through these fairly rocky waters," she said.

"The town staff have watched Sheldon expertly balance work and family life, becoming a role model of a father to Eric and Eva. He is fortunate to have Sandy, his lovely wife, at his side to put up with his shenanigans."

She also gave a shout out to his family dog Banks, the "ultimate heart softener."

"Sheldon is truly a family man, a well-rounded and versatile employee who is always willing to step in where needed. (He is) an intelligent, kind and compassionate member of our senior management team, which is evident in the way our staff adore him," Disero said.



Sheldon Randall worked "tirelessly" during the height of the pandemic, the mayor says. RICHARD HARLEY

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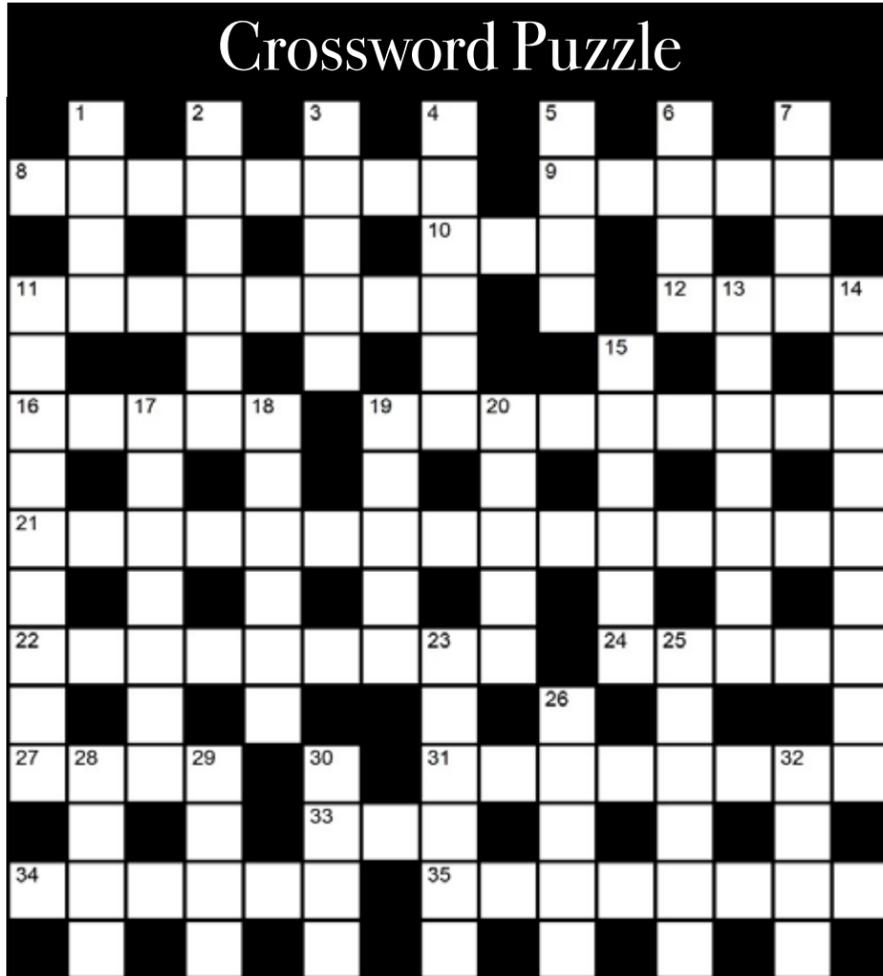
Have some fun

Across

- 8. Precision (8)
- 9. Freezing compartment (6)
- 10. Baste (3)
- 11. Drown Aunt Enid in a fluster (8)
- 12. Former U N leader --- Annan (4)
- 16. Tuscany province (5)
- 19. Out of shot (3,6)
- 21. Throughout the world (15)
- 22. Perceptive (5-4)
- 24. Pigment made from cuttlefish ink (5)
- 27. Gets the point (4)
- 31. Drive out (8)
- 33. US Confederate general (3)
- 34. Fine plaster (6)
- 35. Postponing (8)

Down

- 1. Scrutinize (4)
- 2. Hit the sack (4,2)
- 3. 200 milligrams to a jeweller (5)
- 4. What I normally see in a mirror (6)
- 5. Fruit-bearing Chinese vine (4)
- 6. Hit this to get going (4)
- 7. Dance (4)
- 11. Inborn patterns of behaviour (9)
- 13. Venn diagram common area (7)
- 14. No matter what (2,3,4)
- 15. Twits (6)
- 17. Far-out (7)
- 18. First light (6)
- 19. One end of a fallopian tube (5)
- 20. Cooked in oil (5)
- 23. Beneficiary of primogeniture (6)
- 25. Unfold (6)
- 26. Posed (5)
- 28. Corrodes (4)
- 29. Fortified white Spanish wine of old (4)
- 30. Drama framework (4)
- 32. Characteristic carrier (4)



Last issue's answers



PUBLIC NOTICE

Have your say on Regional incentive programs

Did you know that Niagara Region offers incentive programs to help businesses create jobs, build affordable housing, protect our environment and improve our communities?

These programs are an important part of growing Niagara's economy, but we need to make sure they're hitting the mark. We're reviewing these programs right now, and we want your input. Visit niagararegion.ca and search "incentive review" to give us your feedback through a brief online survey, and register to attend a short virtual information session.

Virtual Information Session
Wednesday, March 24 – 6:30 p.m.
Pre-registration online is required

The session will be hosted using Zoom and can be accessed through your smartphone, tablet, computer, or by phone through teleconference. Register online at niagararegion.ca

If you are unable to attend, you can also contact the project team by calling **905-980-6000 ext. 3357**.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, contact the **Niagara Region's Accessibility Coordinator** at 905-685-4225 ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca

Personal information collected or submitted in writing at public meetings will be collected, used and disclosed by members of Regional Council and Regional staff in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). The written submissions including names, contact information and reports of the public meeting will be made available. Questions should be referred to the Privacy Office at 905-980-6000 ext. 3779 or FOI@niagararegion.ca



The stages of life

Penny-Lynn Cookson
Special to The Lake Report

A week ago, there was a spectacular sunset viewed from Ryerson Park. Jets descending into and rising above Pearson airport were making thin white streaks across a wide band of pink and lilac clouds resting on the horizon line of the grey still lake.

The golden rays of the setting sun which lay behind the clouds, cast a reflective light on the shore where isolated figures were taking photos or sat motionless quietly observing this fleeting moment of pure beauty. Such a contemplative scene brought to mind a 19th-century painting, “The Stages of Life,” by Germany’s most revered Romantic landscape artist, Caspar David Friedrich.

Friedrich was born in

1774, in a Baltic Sea town, Greifswald, then Swedish Pomerania, later part of Germany. He studied at the Copenhagen Academy and settled for good in Dresden.

He was a melancholy man whose mother and two sisters died of illnesses when he was young and then his beloved brother drowned before his eyes when he went through the ice on which they were skating. He did find family tranquillity later in life with a solid marriage, three children, a cherished godson and recognition as an acclaimed artist.

Although there was a taste for melancholy and mysticism in German art at the time, Friedrich adhered more to a philosophy that brought the unconscious life in nature to a conscious expression. He believed the artist should paint not only what was



Caspar David Friedrich, Stages of Life, 1835 Oil on canvas, Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig. SUPPLIED

before him but what he perceived within himself.

He would stare at the blank canvas in his studio until the image “stood life-like” in his mind’s eye. Only then would he sketch it and paint it.

Composition first took place in his imagination. In his landscape paintings, space is always ambiguous, enigmatic, heightened by illumination. He preferred mists and twilight when the changing light and reflection enhanced colour and made the commonplace seem new and transcendent.

He aimed to create im-

ages that would encourage contemplation and alter the viewer’s mood so that the true meaning of the painting would be the emotion it evoked.

In “The Stages of Life,” five boats with sails billowing and furling are coming into port against a big twilight sky of pink, lilac, orange and yellow. In the foreground, an elderly man dressed for protection against a cool breeze, wears a long coat with a fur collar, and a fur hat.

He slowly but firmly makes his way on his cane toward a

family group sitting by the shore. It is a self-portrait of Friedrich. His business-attired nephew and godson, Johann, gestures “Come join us” with his right hand while pointing with his left to the Friedrich children.

The small boy excitedly waves a Swedish flag as his sister tries to grab the flag while the older sister attempts to calm the two. We see five figures and five ships of varying sizes. The two small fishing vessels in the front allude to the two children. The two ghostly ships in the distance might represent the young adults with many unknown journeys ahead of them.

Only Friedrich looks on a diagonal to the horizon and to the central ship coming into harbour before darkness falls, suggesting a premonition of his own impending death. He suffered two debilitating strokes in the year of this painting, done from memory, and was dead in five years. By then he was nearly a forgotten figure.

A reappraisal of his work

occurred in the 20th century. Much has been made of the symbolic meaning regarding life and death in his paintings. Certainly, the affection for family, the meaning and transience of life, the search for spirituality and belief in the immortality of the soul are present.

Friedrich, being a fatalist, left it to posterity to decide: “I am not so weak as to submit to the demands of the age when they go against my convictions. I spin a cocoon around myself; let others do the same. I shall leave it to time to show what will come of it: a brilliant butterfly or a maggot.”

In the 21st century, Friedrich’s work is acknowledged as “butterfly” and is even more resonant as we long for spring and being once again with family and friends sharing and in awe of a beautiful sunset.

Penny-Lynn Cookson is an art historian who taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years. She also was head of extension services at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Dr. Brown: The brain’s motor system and **how we move**

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



Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

Toward the end of his BBC series “The Ascent of Man,” Jacob Bronowski turned his attention to the brain as the biological engine that made possible all of humanity’s achievements in the arts and sciences.

In one segment he uses the early development of the motor system in infancy to illustrate the unfolding march from birth (a few brainstem and spinal reflexes and total dependence on others for nourishment, warmth and protection), to later holding the head up, rolling over, crawling, sitting up, using a nearby prop to shakily stand, soon make the first wobbly steps and, after months of babbling, the first words emerge.

The biological choreography underpinning of such a developmental sequence is exquisite and accompanied by enormous unseen, unfolding

changes in the brain as nerve cells specialize, multiply, migrate and make near and distant connections. And along the way to maturity the planning, imagining, creative, moral, language-speaking, story-telling and mystical parts of the nervous system begin to take hold and shape what we attend to then and for the rest of our lives.

The forebrain plays a large part in the skill with which we move. Without it, no dancing, no playing musical instruments, no writing or even something as simple as tapping the desk in front of me with my finger, are possible.

All depend on closely related regions of the brain working together, including the forebrain, primary and secondary associative cortex in the frontal and parietal lobes, the basal ganglia and cerebellum, whose relationships with one another are extraordinarily complex and

poorly understood as yet.

But whatever our limits, deep brain stimulation (DBS) has proven to be an effective way to stop drug-induced or resistant movement and postures in Parkinson’s disease and the sometimes very disabling tremor in selected cases of benign essential tremor.

What I intend to concentrate on in the NOTL Library’s brain series is much simpler – the upper motor neurons (UMNs) in the primary motor cortex (area 4) and the closely related lower motor neurons (LMNs), which innervate their target muscle fibres and muscles to make happen what was intended by the forebrain and other regions of the brain. Let’s begin with the LMNs.

LMNs, together with the muscle fibres they innervate, constitute the basic unit of the motor system – the motor unit (MU), a term coined by the father of modern neurophysiology, Sir Charles Sherrington. The neurons of which are found in the brain stem and spinal cord and supply all the somatic muscles of the body beginning at the rostral end with the neurons that con-

trol eye movements through to those neurons at the lower end of the spinal cord which innervate the pelvic floor muscles. MUs differ widely in their properties.

Those recruited with the minimal effort (think here of a leisurely walk) are the most common, relatively small (fewest number of muscle fibres per motor neuron), generate the smallest forces and resist fatigue. Mid-range MUs are less common, harder to recruit, innervate more muscle fibres per motor neuron, generate larger forces and like the lowest threshold MUs, resist fatigue (think here of a brisk walk or climbing a hill).

The largest, least common MUs supply the largest number of muscle fibres per motor neuron, have the highest thresholds for recruitment, generate the largest forces but fatigue readily because unlike lower threshold units, they are much more dependent on glycogen for their energy (think here of sprinting).

This overly simplistic picture none-the-less, illustrates that even at the simplest level, the motor system offers a wide range of forces and endurance. MUs are also very

trainable – the force generated by individual motor units and muscles and their fatigue resistance can easily be changed by training in experimental animals and humans.

UMNs are located in the primary motor cortex (area 4) but the areas of the neocortex associated with different regions of the body vary widely in size from one region of the body to another. For example, the areas of the motor cortex and thus the number of UMNs, are much larger for the face, tongue, mouth, forearm and hand muscles compared to areas representing the proximal arm, trunk and leg.

This observation and the finding that the hand and forearm areas of the primary motor cortex contain large nerve cells that are directly connected to the related motor neurons in the cervical spinal cord suggests that the primary motor cortex exercises a high degree of direct control over the forearm and hand muscles and might explain the skill with which we use our hands.

Chimpanzees possess few such direct connections, while other primates have none. Whether such direct

connections exist for the facial muscles hasn’t been explored but given the large representation of the face in the motor cortex, I wouldn’t be surprised that similar direct connections exist for the oral-facial and tongue muscles given their key roles in speech.

Finally, just as exercise and training alter the physiological properties of muscles and MUs, so do they alter the motor cortex.

For example, training reshapes the contours and thickness of the neocortex in the thumb and finger areas of piano players. And if we can modify the motor areas of the brain with exercise training, no doubt it’s possible to alter other regions of the brain through conditioning – which might explain some of the impact of mindfulness and meditation on the brain.

Long-term changes in the brain in response to training, almost certainly involve strengthening connections between related nerve cells by thickening some connections and growing others. All of which leads to next week when we examine the sensory side of the nervous system.



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Gordon Walker

Here is Gordon Walker, playing with his bow and arrow on Platoff Street in the Heritage District, circa 1950. The garage to the left can still be seen today. The barn on the right is where the Prince of Wales Royal Cambridge hall and parking lot are now located. This barn is the former Campbell stables but was also the former home of the Union Jack Canning Company and Campbell's Canning Company. These canning operations were two of several located in Niagara-on-the-Lake. No surprise there as we have some of the best fruit around! The barn was torn down in the 1970s and the current building was built as a community centre.

Obituary

Anne Marie Regehr



*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.*

ANNE MARIE (BRENNAN) REGEHR
Born April 23, 1937 in the old Cottage Hospital, NOTL, and raised in St. Davids, Anne Marie left our world March 8, 2021 peacefully with grace and surrounded by family.

Survived by her childhood sweetheart and loving husband of 63 years Daniel Regehr; children Heather (Mark Williams), Diane Haliski (Mark Holmes) and Teresa Regehr; grandchildren Cody, Bailey (Aaron), Devin, Noel and Cassidy, great-grandchildren Lana, Eamonn & Aine; and siblings Kathleen Sharpe and Terry Brennan.

Predeceased by her son Desmond, parents Nixon and Elsie Brennan (Dawson), and brothers Michael, Harry and Dennis (Brennan).

Anne Marie took great pleasure in being a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and musical director at St. David's Presbyterian Church, and active member of the Niagara Old Tyme Fiddlers Association for years.

She loved to play her Irish piano, fiddle and harp and have fun with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Anne Marie remained healthy and active with a lively spirit, playing music and Scrabble right up to the end, when a stroke took her suddenly.

A special thanks to Stefanie, Danielle and Wendy at GNGH for their compassionate care.
God Bless Her. She will be missed!

To place an obituary in The Lake Report, please call Rob at 905.246-4671 or send him an email at roblamond@niagaranow.com.

When deciding where to publish your cherished memories, keep in mind that a whopping 81% of NOTL news readers prefer The Lake Report over any other newspaper serving our town.



A simply elegant design

Brian Marshall
Columnist

As many regular readers are aware, for the past few months I've been consulting on the restoration of a house built for John Breakenridge in 1823 at the corner of Mississauga and Centre streets in NOTL.

This grand old home was boarded up in 1966 and left to deteriorate, reaching the point of being only months away from catastrophic failure when our work began.

As what is likely the oldest surviving unaltered two-storey cubic form Regency residence in the country, the loss of this building would have been a tragedy.

Over and above rarity, age and historical association with the town, the house is also an exemplary



Modernist Design in 1823. SUPPLIED

execution of the Regency architectural style.

To the uninitiated, the 1823 Breakenridge House, with its clean, uncomplicated lines unbroken by decorative elements, might appear to be an elementary design. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth.

In reality, to achieve architecture that has presence without being overbearing – is visually pleasing, integrates with its context and intuitively “feels right” while employing only straight lines without the use of decorative elements, distractions or artifice – re-

quires extraordinary talent and skill.

Consider, for example, a few details on the 1823 Breakenridge House facade. If you were to vertically divide this facade into four equal parts, you would discover that the lines of division run precisely through the centre of each of the three bays, creating harmonious balance.

While both lower and upper windows have identical widths, the height of the lower windows combined with the location of the brick belt course (which is set higher than the second-storey floor level) establish

a hierarchy that states the primacy of the main floor while enhancing the front door feature.

Importantly, while the upper windows are shorter than the lower windows (as befits their secondary status in the hierarchy), each individual pane of glass in all the windows are of identical size, producing design unity across the facade.

And this only begins to describe the precise use and flawlessly executed design disciplines that were incorporated to produce elegance and grandeur without frippery.

But, of course, every grand lady aspires to a few accessories to subtly accentuate her innate beauty and early Regency architects used the dreamy light refracting qualities of the mouth-blown wavy glass window panes bracketed by complementary shutters to add this touch of elegance.

If you're passing by our project, I am happy to chat or you can follow the progress at: www.heirloom-homeguide.ca/rare-unique-storied.



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- Shepherd's Pie Poutine \$16

EXTRAS: Gluten-free bread +\$2

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- Steak Guinness and Onion Pie \$17
- Liver and Onions \$17

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Served over basmati rice, fresh cut fries or half & half

WEDNESDAY: BOGO BURGERS! Buy 1, Get 1 Half Price
Buy any house made burger and get the second half price

THURSDAY: Liver & Onions \$15
Served with mashed potatoes, peas and carrots

FRIDAY: Fish Fri-Yay \$16 - 1 piece | \$24 - 2 pieces
Haddock served with fries, homemade coleslaw, tartar sauce, & lemon wedge

SUNDAY: Roast Beef Dinner \$20
Slow roasted beef served with peas, carrots, parsnips, Yorkshire pudding, and mashed or roasted potatoes

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