

Print operations being reduced

Due to the COVID-19 situation, The Lake Report is implementing a reduction in print and distribution at this time of emergency in Ontario and across the world. **More on Page 3**

Border closure ‘devastating’ for Niagara farmers, Wiens says

Restrictions mean about 28,000 migrant workers won’t be able to enter Canada

Richard Harley
Editor

The federal government’s plan to close the border to non-Canadians will be “a catastrophe” for the Niagara farming community, says NOTL Coun. Erwin Wiens.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s announcement that border access will be restricted as of Wednesday means no more seasonal workers will arrive in Canada to work in the agricultural industry.

Wiens is a grape farmer and was expecting his own workers to be here in 10 days.

Furthermore, if migrant workers are allowed in and are forced to self-quarantine for 14 days, farmers simply won’t be able to handle that.

“You’re looking at 28,000 people coming into Ontario that have got to come to the farms,” said Wiens in an interview with The Lake Report Monday morning.

“There’s no way we could wait for 14 days. We just couldn’t do it,” he said. “We’re desperate. We have



Migrant farm workers won’t be allowed to enter the country during the border closure. FILE PHOTO/TIM TAYLOR

a very, very short window to get an awful lot of work done and it’s already spring by the looks of it.”

Niagara Falls MP Tony Baldinelli says he and his staff are trying to get some answers from federal Agriculture Minister Marie-

Claude Bibeau.

“The agricultural industry is huge for us in Niagara” and farms need workers now, Baldinelli said in an interview Monday.

He expressed concerns about how a hard-hit farming sector could affect

Canada’s food supply in the months to come.

Wiens said if this pandemic had happened last year it would have been a bit easier to handle.

“If this happened last year, we were delayed, we had a long spring and it was

cold. But this year already there’s no frost in the ground, buds are pushing (and) it’s only March 16. We’re going to have an early bud break.”

Typically workers start to

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Pandemic: Community bands together to help those most at risk

Julia Sacco
Special to The Lake Report

Amid the stress and fear surrounding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, residents of NOTL have banded together to support

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Town’s CAO, two councillors in self-isolation

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Town of NOTL’s top civil servant and two members of council are in self-isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interim chief administrator Sheldon Randall and Couns. Stuart McCormack and Clare Cameron are all in self-isolation.

Randall started his isolation on Sunday, March 15, after returning from vaca-

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Dr. Brown: COVID-19

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

As the New England Journal of Medicine put it in its editorial on Feb. 20, “for the third time in as many decades, a zoonotic coronavirus has crossed species to infect human populations. ... The others included severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV).”

This latest invasion by a coronavirus – COVID-19 – spread worldwide quickly

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NOTL businesses adapt to new reality

Jessica Maxwell
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake businesses are taking precautions and making changes – such as disinfecting more often and not accepting cash – to fight the spread of COVID-19.

Pharmacies, breweries, wineries, gyms and shops that remain open are all changing how they offer their services to the

public to ensure residents and tourists are safe in the community.

COVID-19 has changed the public’s attitude when it comes to how they are spending their time and money in town.

NOTL resident Terry Frawley comes down to Queen Street with his dog Saorise almost every day and can see how the virus has affected the town.

“It’s very quiet. I noticed

it Saturday afternoon,” Frawley said.

“The physicality has changed, people not touching, which is obviously the right thing to do right now. The human contact to this old Irishman is very important to me, but you can’t do that, so you understand and don’t do it.”

Premier Doug Ford on Tuesday morning ordered all bars and restaurants to close or move to

takeout/delivery only. That forced businesses like Silversmith Brewing Company and Sandtrap Pub and Grill to immediately alter operations. And several bars and restaurants just opted to close for the time being.

The popular Sandtrap posted on social media that it is open for takeout for limited hours only, “however you will not be

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Silversmith order handler Ben Goerzen prepares cases of beer to be sent.

JESSICA MAXWELL



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COVID-19 pandemic brings community **together**

Continued from Front Page

the most vulnerable in the community.

The Facebook group NOTL 4 All has become an outlet for community members and small business owners to share news updates and provide helpful tips, from how to properly wash hands to which stores have toilet paper.

"Everyone has come together on the page and are willing to help their neighbours and share whatever they have with everyone else," said Annmarie Baldin, one of the group's administrators.

With 30.9 per cent of the population being over 65, the aging community of NOTL is reasonably fearful of the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Kathy Whitmell-Brown, manager of the Avondale store in Virgill, said older community members are more in need of anti-bacterial and household products.

"They're trying to find hand sanitizer. They're not hoarders. They're just trying to get by with what they need," Whitmell-Brown said.



Martin Mazza pictured inside his restaurant Italian Pizza and Subs shared his appreciation for the Facebook group NOTL 4 All in bringing the community closer. JULIA SACCO

Krista London-Verticchio, owner of local business My Little Party, made a post on the page hoping to organize volunteers to run errands for the most vulnerable in the community.

"My goal is to truly remind everyone to look out for each other! There are so many people in this community who don't have a support system around them," she said in an interview.

"So far numerous people have volunteered their time to the service. To name a few: Phil's Valu-Mart has waived their pick-up fee and Stone Road Pharmacy is offering free delivery of prescriptions," London-Verticchio said.

Juliet Oraziotti said her company Linc Farm at Southbrook delivers products free anywhere in town on Friday afternoons.

"I just thought I'd make sure now that people are more interested in not leaving the house, that they have an option," Oraziotti said.

She said the group has not only helped give resources to those in need, but is spreading the word about small businesses during times of financial loss.

Group administrator Daniel Turner added that small businesses can lose

NOTL Today allows ads

To help area businesses weather the COVID-19 pandemic, Niagara-on-the-Lake's popular Facebook group NOTL Today is allowing companies to post free advertisements.

"My message is, 'How can we as a community help?' Knowing our farmworkers won't be arriving must be devastating," said NOTL Today administrator Julia Buxton-Cox.

"I want to talk to local farmers about arranging community volunteers. We realize pruning fruit trees requires experience and knowledge and they just can't train people and supervise them in such a short time," she said. "I just want to help support the local business owners, workers, their families and the supply chain."

People need experience to operate farm machinery and equipment, "but is there anything we as a community can do to help?"

See the NOTL Today Facebook page for more.

everything during times of economic weakness such as this.

"Even just a few weeks or few months of disruption could be enough to really harm a business or see some businesses close," he said.

"That's why I think it's important for our group to give these businesses a voice to show the different things they're doing to keep their businesses clean and customers safe."

The page gains new supportive and light-hearted posts every day, it is through this coming together of a community that Virgil restaurant owner Martin Mazza says the pandemic has brought members closer rather than pushing them six feet apart.

"It's not hurting our community and it's not dividing us, it's actually bringing people closer together."

Town of NOTL closes facilities, **halts council**

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

With the threat of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is closing the doors to town facilities to mitigate risks to employees and the public.

The town announced Friday that, keeping in line with measures being taken by the province, it will be closing the Meridian Credit Union and Centennial arenas in Virgill, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Queenston libraries and the community centre effective midnight.

The chamber of commerce said it will remain open, with new sanitation restrictions in place.

"Please note that we have enhanced our already careful sanitizing and cleaning measures and are imple-

menting them repeatedly," said a chamber notice on Friday.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum has also closed its doors until April 6, with all programming, including March Break camp, Niagara Nursery services, library programming, public skates and hockey games/tournaments to be rescheduled. Museum staff will arrange reimbursements for cancellations of any previous bookings, said a news release Saturday morning.

"While closed, this will give staff an opportunity to conduct annual maintenance of these facilities. These are temporary, preventative measures, aimed at flattening the curve and slowing the spread of COVID-19," said Sarah Kaufman, curator at the museum.

"We acknowledge that Niagara-on-the-Lake has a high number of residents over the age of 50, one of the demographics identified as most vulnerable. We are doing our part as a municipality to safeguard our community by taking these proactive and protective actions."

The town said members of the Emergency Operation Centre have been actively meeting and have developed a business continuity plan to ensure that residents continue to receive essential services.

"In the meantime, we ask that you do your part by remaining calm, by practicing social distancing, by continuing to adhere to prevention techniques outlined by Niagara Region Public Health and by not overloading hospital and health facilities," said a

town release Friday.

The town is reminding residents that even though one case has now been confirmed in Niagara, the risk to residents remains low. Anyone who believes they have any symptoms of COVID-19 is asked to first phone Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000.

The town municipal offices are still open, but the town urges residents to stay home if the matter isn't urgent.

"There are many ways we can serve you online - if you don't absolutely need to come into the town administrative office, please don't. Call first between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 905-468-3266 or take advantage of our online service requests at notl.com. Additional informative resources can be found at notl.com/COVID-19."

Council enacts election-time bylaw to allow Lord Mayor and CAO to make **decisions** during COVID-19 crisis

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has enacted a bylaw to allow Lord Mayor Betty Disero and interim CAO Sheldon Randall to make decisions on council's behalf during the COVID-19 crisis.

The decision was made at a special meeting of council Tuesday night, and is in essence the same bylaw used during election times, Disero said during a phone interview Wednesday.

She said she thinks most municipalities are doing the same and the Region of Niagara was meeting Wednesday to discuss implementing the same bylaw.

With council meetings cancelled, the town might have issues, such as moving money around, that need a decision, Disero said.

"There were only eight people in the room, seven members of council, one member of staff," Disero said.

Two councillors, Stuart McCormack and Clare Cameron joined the meeting by phone.

"I know the procedural bylaw doesn't allow that for council, but I did it anyway because I thought they should at least hear it and be part of the conversation," Disero said.



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Print edition will be **reduced** due to COVID-19

With the COVID-19 outbreak and life changing for everyone in our community daily, we urge all our readers in Niagara-on-the-Lake to follow the latest news daily on our website, www.niagaranow.com, Lakereport.ca and our Facebook page.

Also, with all the upheaval we've seen over the

past few days, we want you to know that, in case it is necessary to suspend publication of our newsprint edition, The Lake Report is prepared to start producing a digital-only version of the newspaper to be circulated electronically to the community on Thursdays.

We will take that step if it is in the best interests of the

community, as people hunker down at home to flatten the curve of COVID-19 infections. Sign up for our email alerts on our website.

Next week, to do our part to help prevent the potential spread of the virus, we will be reducing the number of printed copies of the paper.

To our valued advertisers, you are the lifeblood of

The Lake Report. We will do everything possible to ensure your messages get out to the community and we appreciate your continued support over the next several weeks.

And to our loyal readers, please keep in touch and let us know when news happens, by email at editor@niagaranow.com.

Town's CAO, two councillors in **self-isolation**

Continued from Front Page

tion and will continue for two weeks. He is working from home.

Lord Mayor Betty Disero said McCormack also was away and is in self-isolation until March 20.

Cameron had contact with someone who came from "an area where there's an issue" and is in isolation until March 30, Disero said.

"We're trying to be as consistent as every other municipality within the Niagara region," Randall said in an interview. "We're trying to provide the best information we can to the public to ensure that we're doing everything we can from a municipal perspective to provide safety to our residents."

Randall said anyone who is concerned about their own need to self-isolate should check public health websites to "gain clarity on what they should and shouldn't be doing."

"I'm not a health expert so any recommendations I would be providing would be directly related to or from any of the public health websites — the regional website, or provincial or federal sites."

Disero said the town is following provincial



Interim CAO Sheldon Randall is in self-isolation after returning from a personal trip. RICHARD HARLEY

strategy to try to isolate and stop the spread.

"If people have been away or in an area or contacted somebody that was in an area, they should just stay home and take the time. So that way we can help each other not spread, or potentially spread, any contamination," she said.

"If you can work from home, work from home."

"The town has a very strict rule as of Friday when the provincial notice was sent out about, you know, don't go anywhere where there is 250 (people) or potential for public gatherings. We're following that guideline," Disero said.

Because Randall is a leader in the community and the town's senior public servant, he is leading by example, Disero said.

"He was away and he's

staying home for the 14 days that the province recommends. And the advice would be to look at the provincial guidelines and rules and follow them if you can."

Randall added, "Even if you haven't been traveling and you can limit your contact or access to other people, I think it's just a smart thing to do right now. Especially with people that are more vulnerable in our community."

He commended NOTL businesses that are taking initiatives to try to help out during the pandemic. "I think it's fantastic that everybody's doing what they can to step up and help out. I think the important thing now is how do we get that message out to everybody, that they are

trying to help out. We can push it out through social media and our avenues, but there's a lot of people in this community that don't have access to social media, so I think we have to put a bit more thought into how we reach out a bit further."

Disero said people need to put others first.

"We are a community, we have to think of the community. You may feel fine but you may be a carrier. Do not think of yourself, think of the public and the community at large. If you've been away, you may feel great but you may be carrying something that you shouldn't be, so just think about others."

Randall said he's all set up at his kitchen table. "With the technology that we have in place these days, a lot of our staff can work from home. And similar to me, I'm functioning like I'm sitting in my office right now. So it's great."

Randall said he's proud of the way the town's Emergency Operations Control is performing.

"Thanks to all the hard work we've done in the past couple of years preparing for something like this, we're seeing the benefits of that today."

Obituary

MORRISON, Barbara Joan



MORRISON, Barbara Joan
The celebration of Barbara's life that was to be held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 323 Simcoe St., Niagara-on-the-Lake, on Saturday, March 21, 2020 at 11 a.m., has been postponed due to the COVID19. Service details to be determined and will be announced at a later date. Photos, memories, and condolences may be shared at www.morganfuneral.com

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Niagara Health opens **COVID-19** assessment centre

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

The first of two COVID-19 assessment centres planned for the Niagara region opened Monday. The centre, located behind the Greater Niagara General site in

Niagara Falls, will provide screening, assessment and testing for individuals with symptoms of COVID-19. The assessment centre will be available by referral only.

Community members who believe they have been exposed to

COVID-19 should contact Public Health by calling 905-688-8248 ext. 7019 or toll free at 1-888-505-6074. On the call, patients will be screened for travel history and symptoms.

The centre is unable to accept walk-ins. Anyone requiring emergency care

should call 911 or visit the nearest Niagara Health Emergency Department.

The second COVID-19 assessment centre is expected to open in St. Catharines next week. Further details will be shared as soon as they are available.

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Editor-In-Chief: Richard Harley
Managing Editor: Kevin MacLean
Publisher: Niagara Now
Design & Layout: Richard Harley
Advertising: Rob Lamond, Lisa Jeffrey
Contributors: Brittany Carter, Dariya Baiguzhiyeva, Jessica Maxwell, Jill Troyer, Tim Taylor, Denise Ascenzo, Linda Fritz, Dr. William Brown, Brian Marshall, Susan Des Islets, Jim Smith, Jaclyn Wilms, Collin Gooddine, Leslie Moulson, Steve Hardaker, Plunger Patrol, Ross Robinson, Tim Carroll, NOTL Writers' Circle, Lisa Tache, Megan Vanderlee, and many more members of the NOTL community



Contributed by Norm Arsenault:

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- National Geographic



Contributed by Patty Garriock

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Editorial

It's time to put others **first**

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

New expressions have found their way into the everyday lexicon in the past week or so.

- Social distancing.
- Flattening the curve.
- Self-isolating.
- And COVID-19.

Yes, these are scary times for many people, especially the most vulnerable – and Niagara-on-the-Lake being a community of many older, sometimes sicker, individuals there is cause for concern here.

On Monday at 8:21 p.m., Dr. David Williams, the province's chief medical officer of health, issued what seems to have been a little-noticed statement, caught up perhaps in the maelstrom of information that is flooding our psyches.

The statement, headlined "Enhanced measures to protect Ontarians from COVID-19," outlined his "request" that bars and restaurants close or move to takeout/delivery only. Of course, barely 12 hours later, Premier Doug Ford ordered those establishments to close immediately except

for takeout. That illustrates how fast things are changing.

But also lurking in Williams' statement was his recommendation that: "All persons over 70 years of age and individuals who are immunocompromised are advised to self-isolate for a period of 14 days. This means that you should only leave your home or see other people for essential reasons. Where possible, you should seek services over the phone or internet or ask for help from friends, family or neighbours with essential errands."

Perhaps by the time you read this, it will be mandatory for all people over 70 (and maybe even all of us) to self-isolate for two weeks.

However, even if it is not mandatory, with a large population of older folks here in NOTL, we think it is wise for them to heed Williams' advice and stay indoors.

But worry not, NOTLers who are self-isolated. Your community is rallying to provide help if you need it.

Whether it's the spontaneous actions of people offering to run errands or pharmacist Sean Simpson leading the way to offer special seniors-only hours or friends and neighbours sim-

ply taking time to look out for others, our community has quickly shown a remarkable ability to do the right things in a time of crisis.

Kudos to everyone who has stepped up to offer help, whether publicly or quietly away from the spotlight. Lord Mayor Betty Disero reminded us in an interview that now is the time to put others first. She said it better than we could:

"We are a community, we have to think of the community. You may feel fine but you may be a carrier. Do not think of yourself, think of the public and the community at large. If you've been away, you may feel great but you may be carrying something that you shouldn't be, so just think about others."

In NOTL, people are indeed thinking of others and showing what kind of a community we live in and the spirit that thrives here. Bravo to everyone.

It likely is going to be several weeks, maybe even months, before we defeat this life-threatening virus. Let's keep up the good work, NOTL.

editor@niagaranow.com

Thank you!

The Lake Report would like to thank all of those who have made donations to the paper in the past few weeks. Every little bit helps us keep the news coming for free to every household in town. And for this we can't say "thank you" enough.

Here is a list of people who have made donations of \$100 or more since the beginning of 2020. There are many others who have made our recommended \$50 "voluntary" subscription. Thank you to each and every one of you.



- Bob and Terry Wheatley
- Robert and Elaine McCaughey
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- Dr. Elizabeth Oliver-Malone
- Richard Liptrap and Lynne Stewart
- Susan and Dale Des Islets
- Kate Sullivan
- Charles and Suzanne Rate
- Jonathon and Elizabeth Kormos
- Earle and Sheila Muir

Be a **friendly** neighbour

Here's a card you can cut out and give to your neighbours who may be in need during this time of crisis due to COVID-19 (novel coronavirus). The Lake Report encourages neighbours to help each other, while also taking necessary precautions to avoid spreading the virus.

Hello! If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is: _____

I live locally at: _____

My phone number is: _____

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19, I can help with

Picking up shopping Posting mail

A friendly phone call Urgent supplies

COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) is contagious. Please ensure you're doing your best to spread only kindness. Avoid physical contact, wash your hands, and leave items on doorsteps.

NOTL: SPECIAL WINTER EDITION

The Lake Report's winter magazine highlights some of the best places and things to do in NOTL.

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OPINION

Dr. Brown: Living with COVID-19



Continued from Front Page

and created pandemonium everywhere it went, as much from the fear stoked by the media and uncertain leadership at the top, as the disease itself. Even so, the disease and the attempts to contain it, shut down China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, Spain, France and threatens to do much the same to the United Kingdom and now North America. And that's only the beginning – it's a frightening pace.

Although the genome of COVID-19 was quickly sequenced, effective vaccination and antiviral drugs are probably several months off in the future, possibly as much as a year away, or about the time the virus will probably have run its natural course. So, we shouldn't look for a quick fix anytime soon.

In the meantime, management of the COVID-19 pandemic is all about slowing the spread of the disease, or as some epidemiologists put it, "flattening the curve" to minimize overloading Canada's health care systems, by reducing the pressure on intensive care services and their staff, and protecting the most vulnerable. The latter include those in their 70s and above and others of any age who suffer from one or more chronic disease, such as diabetes, or those that affect the lungs, heart or compromise the immune system.

COVID-19 is highly infectious and spreads chiefly by contact with infected individuals whose sneezing and coughing spray the virus onto nearby surfaces, or those nearby in airplanes, cars, subways, taxis, buses, theatres or coffee shops, to name a few.

Making matters worse, infected patients may be asymptomatic for several days, to as much as two weeks, before they develop symptoms such as a dry cough,

sore throat or feel unwell – long before fever develops. Checks for fever probably miss many infected but asymptomatic patients.

Without barriers in place to limit the spread of the disease, the spread appears to be exponential. For example, if one infected person transmits the disease to two others and each of those, to two more each, and so on, it's obvious that the number of infected people in successive cycles increases in bounds from two to as many as 1,000 persons within 10 cycles – and that's only doubling with each cycle.

Imagine if each infected person, infected five or more per cycle – the math is terrifying. That's why it's so important to separate those with the infection from those not yet infected, especially the most vulnerable among us.

All three coronaviruses, COVID-19, SARS and MERS attack the lungs. In the case of COVID-19, the virus characteristically targets the far reaches of the lungs where gas exchange takes place – hence the ominous early development of shortness of breath – especially in the elderly and those with chronic diseases.

The overall mortality rate varies between 1 and 3 per cent but the scary part is that it roughly doubles every decade beginning with those in their 50s at 1.3 per cent, and rising to 15 per cent for those in their 80s. Reasons for the higher mortality rates as we get older include a weaker immune system – even among the most fit of us – and the compounding effects of coexisting chronic diseases in later life.

So, what can we do? Not much, other than general supportive measures supplemented by antibiotics should secondary bacterial infections develop and ventilatory support as needed – given that so far, there are no current effective antiviral agents, and effective vaccination is at least a half a year away, although there's reason to hope that both may become available earlier.

In the meantime, the most effective measures include

self-quarantining, social distancing and frequent hand-washing. Social distancing means keeping away from potentially infected patients, which because we don't know who they are, means keeping a minimum of six feet from everyone.

It also means staying away from gatherings of more than 10 participants, avoiding travel, especially international travel for now, shopping in off hours when there are fewer people about and hopefully something left on the shelves, and as one site put it – living like a hermit – and another site, taking control of our lives. And if you think you might have coronavirus infection, please phone the doctor's office first, don't go there.

On the hygiene front, what about masks, cleaning hands and surfaces? Masks work best for those who are infected, to prevent them spraying their surroundings when they cough or sneeze. For the rest, masks discourage the natural tendency of many of us touch our faces, which unfortunately increases the chance of the virus entering our body through our eyes and mouth.

Soap and water for washing the hands beats anything else because the soap breaks up the fatty protective outer coat of the virus, unlike any other prep. Because the virus can survive several hours on surfaces such as tabletops and chairs, it makes sense to wipe them down regularly, especially in public venues.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes for Health (NIH) in the United States carried out worst-case projections for the United States for this pandemic: for Canada, divide by 10 to approximate Canadian numbers.

For the USA with a population of 330 million, the worst-case scenario is that somewhere between 160 million and 210 million Americans will become infected, of which 2.5 million to 20 million could require hospitalization and the number of deaths might range somewhere between 200,000 and 1.7 million. That's the worst-case

scenario: hopefully we'll never get there but given the importance of effective early monitoring and action – give the U.S. and Canada a grade 'C' so far.

The longer we wait before truly effective action by governments at all levels and personal decision-making, the worse this pandemic's impact could be. It's ultimately up to each of us to change our behaviour and make the right decisions about social hygiene and distancing. Without compliance on all fronts by each of us, we're all going to be in trouble.

There is a social cost to the pandemic created by social isolation. This is especially so for those in their later life who find company in conversations with others in get-togethers in the post office, stores, churches, community centres, coffee shops, exercise facilities, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, movies and theatres which make up much of the social calendar, almost all of which has been curtailed. Without these options, the quality of life for so many seniors will be seriously affected.

It isn't all about mortality rates and health care costs. There's a social cost to everyone's health that doesn't have a dollar sign on it and hasn't been factored into the plans of governments or the health care professions, yet.

See the following resources with the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 in Canada and the CDC in the United States: *Niagara Region Public Health* <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19/default.aspx>, *Ontario government* <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>, *federal government* <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>, *CDC* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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

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The Lake Report



Newark Neighbours staff receive a donation from The Scottish Loft. SUPPLIED PHOTO/SIMON BENTALL

Now is the time to pull together

Dear editor:

With all the worry everyone is currently feeling due to the corona virus pandemic, I felt I would like to write a note just to remind people that a negative can be turned into a positive.

Recently, our landlord informed us that we would need to close our store for possibly up to a month.

We were deeply concerned about the effect it would have on us and our loyal customers.

We had quite a large amount of food that would expire during this time, so we decided to donate it to Newark Neighbours and give something back to our community whilst providing some treats that they don't normally

receive.

We were happy to do this, knowing the food was not going to waste and, hopefully, would be putting a smile on the face of someone in need.

During this uncertain time, please reach out to people in our community, especially the elderly or someone who struggles with mobility.

It feels good to help each other, especially now, when we all feel so helpless.

This is the time to pull together.

Simon Bentall
The Scottish Loft
NOTL

When the going gets tough

Dear editor:

When the going gets tough...

For the last several weeks the news media has pummeled us with COVID-19, raising a generalized fear in people around the world. Stock markets have dropped like a stone as day traders (and other uneducated investors) have reacted in their typical "take the money and run" fashion.

Public institutions have closed their facilities and places of social gathering like bars, restaurants and theatres have been ordered shut. And, it appears that many levels of government are limping along, impaired by the lack of ability to hold meetings. And the list goes on.

While I'm not minimizing the fine work being done by our public health folks, it isn't the Bubonic Plague we're dealing with. Reasonable, practical methods and precautions are certainly in order but this wild-eyed fear that has emptied the grocery store shelves of toilet paper... Really?

All that said, we have to deal with where we're at because if steps aren't taken (and soon) the economic

consequences will be devastating.

The saying "When the going gets tough, the tough get going" was derived from a statement made by Joseph Kennedy (father of JFK): "When the situation gets critical, those who aren't weak-willed work harder and never give up." Another iteration of this quote, and perhaps very appropriate to our current circumstances, goes: "When the times are tough, the tough see opportunities."

So, if your customers can't or won't come to you, then it falls into your hands to get your products to them. Restaurants can do take-out/delivery via outfits like Uber Eats. Grocery stores and pharmacies can pick and deliver orders. Wineries can box and ship bottles of wine to their clients' front door. We live in an electronic age in which shopping online and home delivery is more and more the norm. All of the tools are there, they just have to be assembled.

Speaking of technology, if you can't hold in-person meetings use Zoom or Skype or similar. I and many others have used these platforms for years. You may not be

Can we all just stop hoarding? It's not necessary

Dear editor:

On Monday morning I headed over to Shoppers Drug Mart on Niagara Stone Road because I needed to pick up a few things we are out of.

One of those items was Lysol wipes.

Unfortunately, I was not surprised to find the shelves cleared of these and all other cleaning products. It was the same story on a recent trip to Valu-Mart in Virgil.

The same goes, of course, for toilet paper. Is TP the new "go-to" staple in times of crisis now?

All I could do was shake my head and wonder what is going on.

I understand that we are living in a very uncertain time and it is scary.

Certainly the complete dominance of this story on television, newspapers and social media is causing many to panic, but, do we really need to buy as much Lysol and toilet paper as we can carry?

Unless we have to self-isolate for 14 days, (but how much toilet paper does one family go through in that time?!), a short trip to grocery or drugstores when needed is still possible.

And if we stop and think and buy only the amount we need, and no more, then we are being good neighbours as well.

It would also help if retailers erect signs limiting quantities. But even without this measure, can we not think of others and limit ourselves?

Laura Jeffrey
Niagara-on-the-Lake

able to physically shake hands (a good thing right now) however, you can do everything else.

This is particularly important for all levels of government because while they may be able to "pick up where they left off" in a month or so, the average business (and their employees) does not have the kind of financial resources that would allow them to shut down for a month while they wait for a permit (or whatever).

I shudder to think of how many people will be out of work if the government DOESN'T adopt easy workarounds like Zoom. In part, the economic well-being of our communities depend on a functioning government bureaucracy.

At this juncture it is pointless to cast blame for a lack of emergency preparedness on business or government or individuals. It is time we pull together, be creative, seize our opportunities and work together to come out of this situation a better, healthier community and country.

We have the ability, it just takes the will to "get going."

Brian Marshall
NOTL



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Shaw **Cancels** first month of season

Mike Keenan
Special to The Lake Report

The first month of the Shaw Festival has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Festival executive director Tim Jennings announced Monday evening that 33 performances, from April 2 to 30, have been cancelled.

The economic impact on Niagara-on-the-Lake could be severe, Jennings said, estimating that for every single dollar the Shaw loses, the region loses \$7 to \$10.

“It’s like juggling hand-grenades,” Jennings said at the start of a media conference call to address the spread of COVID-19.

“Your health and safety and that of our community, our artists and our staff is our top priority. We feel that cancelling performances and drastically reducing business operations is the only responsible decision at this time,” he said.

The three plays involved are “Gypsy,” Charley’s Aunt” and “Prince Caspian.”

Jennings said the season will not be extended because that would interfere



Chick Reid as Mrs. Wilberforce and Damien Atkins as Professor Marcus in *The Ladykillers*. DAVID COOPER/FILE

with the Shaw’s commitments to its winter productions.

Artistic director Tim Carroll said in a news release, “I know our amazing audience will understand and support us and we send everyone our love and good thoughts. Please stay safe and well. We will get through this together.”

“We have an incredible team here who have been cooking up some wonderful theatre,” Carroll added.

“Of course it is frustrating to have to put that on hold, but if our aim is to create a more human, more

connected theatre, then our first priority has to be keeping everyone safe.”

As of now, the festival plans to resume rehearsals and reopen its administration and box offices on April 6, but that all depends on the progress of the fight against the pandemic. The next big decision will occur around April 2.

In the interim, Jennings indicated that cast and crew will be paid through April 6.

The news comes a little more than a week after the festival’s annual general meeting, at which the Shaw announced that 2019 had

been its most successful year ever at the box office.

The festival had a 13 per cent increase in gross operating revenue, taking in a \$34.1 million and posting a surplus of more than \$500,000.

The cancellation decision was made while consulting with public health and other officials in the midst of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau shutting the border Monday to non-Canadians. Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump has called for people to avoid crowds of 10 and Ontario Premier Doug Ford has suggested avoiding gatherings of 50 or more.

Those who have tickets to the affected performances will have the full value of their tickets held on their account.

Box office representatives will be contacting ticket holders to reschedule or refund tickets once the box office reopens. In the meantime, anyone with ticket-related questions is advised to email feedback@shawfest.com.

For the most up-to-date information please visit shawfest.com.

Newark Neighbours suspends shopping and drop-offs, **food bank open**

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Newark Neighbours is suspending shopping and drop-offs until April 6 in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“To all our valued customers and food bank clients, the health and safety and comfort of our volunteers, customers and food bank clients is our number one priority. The growing concerns regarding COVID-19 pandemic is an important health matter, and one that Newark Neighbours is taking seriously,” said vice-chair Suzanne Vaillant, in an email to The Lake Report.

“At this time, we feel it necessary to suspend shopping and drop offs until April 6th. We will re-evaluate at that time. Our drop-off bins will be locked until further notice - Please do not leave donations around on the ground as they will only go into the garbage which is a cost to Newark Neighbours.”

While drop-offs are closed, Vaillant says the food bank will remain open.

“Our priority is our food bank. We hope to be able to have no disruption in service for our clients. We are working on a plan to safely accept food donations and to be able to ensure our clients do not go hungry during this Pandemic.”

Food Room Clients: The Food Room will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 2 p.m.

Anyone in need of services is advised to phone the food bank at 905-468-3519 and leave a message.

“We appreciate and value the generosity of our community for your donations which allows us to continue our mission of serving our community with compassion, care and concern,” Vaillant said.

“Making this mission a reality would not be possible without all of our volunteers whose time and effort we greatly appreciate.”


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Left: Attilio Tonellato checks his blood pressure at Simpson's Pharmacy on Wednesday. Right: NOTL resident Diane Pietri

Simpson's Pharmacy launches speci

Jessica Maxwell
 The Lake Report

Simpson's Pharmacy has introduced reserved morning shopping hours for seniors as a COVID-19 social distancing measure.

The goal of setting aside opening hours from 8:30 to 11 a.m. is to protect the more vulnerable members of the community from the spread of the virus.

"What we really want to do is keep the most vulnerable members of our society safe so we can reduce the transmission to them because they are most likely the ones to suffer the most severe illness and consequences," pharmacy owner Sean Simpson told The Lake Report Monday.

"As additional measures are announced, we want people to be aware that we

want to keep ourselves and our team safe and one of the best ways we can do that is by maintaining a safe environment in-store."

Simpson is encouraging people to continue practicing proper hygiene and to stay home as much as possible.

A Facebook post by Simpson on March 15 proposed all "pharmacies and grocery stores of Niagara-on-the-Lake reserve the first 2-3 opening hours per day be reserved for those most at risk only. Our elderly."

NOTL residents Hugh and Lillian Hutton didn't know about the change to morning shopping hours until arriving on Monday.

"It appears to me as though the country is doing a good job and being proactive, having seen what's happening," Hugh

said. "Take heed of what the news is saying."

"(We should) do our part, washing our hands and all that, not going out unless we have to," Lillian said.

Simpson said he's hopeful Niagara-on-the-Lake will manage to flatten the curve of the spread.

"We've got a lot of smart, bright people around and if we all take proactive measures to follow through on recommendations and announcements then I think we will have a better outcome in our community than some other places," he said.

"There's no question that the virus will continue to circulate and infect people, but if we can slow that rate down then we can really reduce the impact that it will have in our community but it's going to take a lot of

sacrifice."

As the COVID-19 situation changes "minute-to-minute" he said the pharmacy will evaluate every option they have to keep customers, their team and families safe."

This could mean changes to the pharmacy's practices and hours of operation. Simpson's will continue to keep its Facebook page as things change.

"We will always figure out ways of getting things to people the way they need them," Simpson said.

Delivery of prescription medications takes priority, but the pharmacy wants to deliver any necessities of day-to-day living for people who may not be able to leave their homes.

"The message I really want to get out right now is that, more than any-

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

e Report

postponed due to a mass cancellation of events due to COVID-19.

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Monday morning at Simpson's Pharmacy during hours reserved for senior shopping. JESSICA MAXWELL

al hours just for seniors

thing, people don't need to come to the store," Simpson said. "We're happy to deliver."

"My feeling is that we are going to hear about more severe measures that are going to need to be taken, which is why my ultimate feeling is that I would like to have the problem of having too many deliveries."

To tackle deliveries, he said he may need to rely on help from people in the community who might not be able to work their real jobs right now, keeping in mind precautions that need to be taken for hygiene training. He said he already knows of some people who have reached out to help.

The mood of customers coming into the pharmacy varies at the moment, Simpson said.

"I think it's fair that we all have a bit of anxiety right now and I think that it's really important that we all be empathetic and kind to each other."

NOTL resident Diane Pietrias said "the whole situation is very sad."

It's hard having three young adults at home who don't get it and she is, "seeing the dichotomy of who cares and who doesn't."

"I have a 19-, 20- and 24-year-old still living at home," Pietrias said. "I would say in the last day or two they've curtailed their activities. You know not ended it, just sort of not doing as much."

Pietras said she thinks it's harder for young people to cancel everything because they might think they're going to be OK and aren't

worried about older people getting sick.

"It's that sort of disconnect that is probably endemic to our society right now," she said. "I think that if I had one thing to give them it would be to think of others."

Although social distancing is about limiting the contact we have with each other Simpson encourages people to "reach out and connect" and try using forms of technology like online video chats.

"There's a lot of uncertainty, so we have to just recognize that we're really all in this together and hopefully we can look back on this exercise knowing we all made sacrifices for the greater good," Simpson said. "There's lots of potential for technology to help people stay connected as we

navigate this."

He said he thinks the measures we take to reduce the transmission through social distancing and listening to our public health authorities are going "to go a long way towards easing that panic."

The theme that has to be constant is people using proper hygiene and washing their hands with soap and water when possible. "Generally speaking, when people stay home they would have access to soap and water," Simpson said.

"If everybody kind of gets to a certain degree of social distancing we will be able to thwart the transmission or at least slow down the transmission so that the people that need the services will get it and that's really the measures we've taken."

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GAMES



Have some fun

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

Across

- 1. Shrink (5)
- 5. Iberian monarchy (5)
- 8. Second planet (5)
- 10. Atoll used for nuclear tests (6)
- 11. Foolish (6)
- 12. Brittle (5)
- 13. Open up (6)
- 14. Mistakes (6)
- 15. Tender (5)
- 17. Penniless person (6)
- 19. Applauds (6)
- 20. U S state famous for potatoes (5)
- 21. Greek goddess of wisdom (6)
- 23. Brawn (6)
- 25. Crawl (5)
- 26. Short cannon (6)
- 27. False (6)
- 29. Beginning (5)
- 31. Spongelike (6)
- 32. Adequate (6)
- 33. Throwing weapon (5)
- 34. Appears (5)
- 35. Inheritors (5)

Down

- 2. Systematically arranged body of facts (7)
- 3. Capital of Egypt (5)
- 4. Against (4)
- 6. Incapable (9)
- 7. Underwriter (7)
- 8. Highest military decoration (8,5)
- 9. Powerful number cruncher (13)
- 16. Scale (5)
- 18. Sleeping accommodation which is only occasionally used (5,4)
- 22. Couple (7)
- 24. Recliner (7)
- 28. That group (5)
- 30. W W II sub-machine gun (4)

Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
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			33						
34						35			

Last issue's answers

1	A	B	S	E	N	T	E	E	B	O	X	E	R
2	C	E	O	X	B	B	X	D					
3	C	O	C	O	N	U	T	A	P	E	L	I	K
4	L	A	E	R	R	N	D	S	A				
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9	P	O	S	T	M	A	S	T	E	R	V	I	S
10	A	O	N	P	R	B							
11	M	E	T	R	O	P	O	L	I	S	K	I	W
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13	E	A	R	S	H	O	T	O	V	E	R	U	S
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Raccoons dealing with **virus**, too

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Some good samaritans stopped Sunday on their way into town to help a raccoon that was walking around on Mississagua Street.

The raccoon appeared to be blind, with its eyes crusted shut, and was walking around in circles.

Nicolle Lalonde, a St. Catharines resident, was the first to stop to help.

"I was driving into town and the car ahead of me stopped, so I stopped behind him and he went around the little guy. And he was sitting in the middle of the lane, so I honked my horn to see if he would move and he didn't seem to be moving very well, so I threw on my hazard lights and tried to shoo him off the road," said Lalonde.

"He appears to be blind, and even his sense of smell

seems to be not very good, so myself and this other couple tried to coax him onto the side (of the road)."

Lalonde called the Humane Society, which said somebody had already reported it and someone was on the way.

Matthew Wilson, of Virgil, was one of the others to try and help.

He said him and his mother were travelling from Virgil to Niagara-on-the-Lake to enjoy the nice day and get a coffee when they spotted Lalonde out of her car trying to help the raccoon.

"We saw her guiding a little raccoon to the side of the street ... she couldn't get it off the road, so we got out and I just got a little stick and tried to guide it off the street."

He said the raccoon was acting "really weird and strange" and thought maybe it had been hit by a car or had an eye infection.

An Ontario SPCA worker named Kaitlin arrived on scene to take the raccoon shortly after Lalonde and Wilson got it off the road.

She said the raccoon had a virus called distemper, which infects the animal's respiratory tract, the gastrointestinal tract, the spinal cord and the brain. The only thing that can be done, she said, is humane euthanasia.

Distemper is fatal and is the second leading cause of death for raccoons, according to the Humane Society.

"Unfortunately there is no cure for it," the worker said. "It slowly just infects them, like you see here, he can't see through his eyes."

She said some signs of distemper are eye discharge and if the raccoon is wandering in circles.

According to the Humane Society, distemper is highly contagious and is transferred through inhalation.

"Distemper is a canine virus that affects raccoons, it is also known as Panleukopenia in cats. Raccoons typically carry the strain that can be transferred to canine species including companion pets such as dogs and ferrets. Puppies between the ages of three to six months are at greater risk of infection. Wildlife in our area that is at risk of getting infected includes raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes and weasels," said the Humane Society website.

Information from the Humane Society says pets with up-to-date vaccinations should be protected from the virus, but if you're not sure you can check with your veterinarian.

Lalonde said she had been headed into town to support local businesses in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The reason I'm coming to town is, we were supposed to leave for Mont-



A raccoon with distemper was found on Mississagua Street Sunday. RICHARD HARLEY

Tremblant this morning, and I was looking forward to the 'Snowshoe and Fondue Tour,' so I called Cheese Secrets and I said 'I was planning to have a fondue dinner tonight, and that's not going to happen. Can you help me out?' And they said 'of course, come down and see us,' so that's where I'm on my way to."

Lalonde said it's important right now with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to support local businesses.

"I try to shop local on a

normal day, but this week I particularly want to make sure I'm coming out and supporting whoever I can still support while they're still open."

"My first stop was the cupcake place, my second stop will be the cheese place, my third stop will be Southbrook winery, and any of the little farmer stands in between to pick up some fresh vegetables. That's my plan today."

"You gotta support your independent stores," added Wilson.

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Irish Harp St. Patrick's Day celebrations postponed, will still go on when things are 'back to normal'

Richard Harley
 The Lake Report



The Irish Harp is selling \$50 gift cards while it is closed. FILE PHOTO/DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

Though the restaurant is closed, and St. Patrick's Day plans aren't moving forward right now, Jesse Morningstar of the Irish Harp says spirits are still high.

The restaurant has become known locally for its St. Patrick's Day celebrations, which the restaurant typically goes all out for.

This year, with the province demanding closures of bars and restaurants due to COVID-19, the party won't be happening — at least not right now.

Morningstar, a server at the Harp, said the restaurant still plans to throw its annual bash, just at a later date, when things are "back to normal."

"We're going to throw an-

other St. Patrick's Day party as soon as it's safe to do so," Morningstar told The Lake Report Tuesday.

"So we're postponing it. We'll (still) have a big party."

He said despite everything going on and the restaurant being fully closed, staff

morale is still high.

"Spirits are still good, everyone is just being safe and cautious," said Morningstar.

"We are closed fully, no takeout or anything," he added.

The rest of the restaurant's March events and bands are also cancelled until the

pub reopens. Reopening is planned for March 31.

In the meantime the restaurant is doing a gift card promotion.

"It's a \$50 gift card and you get an extra \$10 gift card for every one that's purchased," Morningstar said.

Two Sisters first NOTL winery to close public operations

Richard Harley
 The Lake Report

Two Sisters Vineyards has become the first Niagara-on-the-Lake winery to close its doors due to the threat of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus).

The winery released a statement Saturday, saying it will cease all public-facing operations until April 6, out of concern for the public and staff.

The winery will also close its Kitchen76 restaurant.

"We strongly believe at Two Sisters Vineyards it is

our responsibility and business owners to do our part within our community by being proactive and making every effort possible to keep families safe," said winery owners Angela Marotta and Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli, in the statement.

"We have been continually monitoring the situation and have made the decision, along with our team, to close our customer-facing operations effective March 16, until a tentative date of April 6, 2020. We feel this is the best choice for our

dedicated customers, our staff and their loved ones as well as our Niagara-on-the-Lake community."

The winery says it will still be offering wine through its website and shipping to customers' doors.

"We understand these are difficult and scary times. We are thinking of you all," said the release.

Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake board member Andrew Niven said as of Sunday he hasn't heard of any other wineries shutting doors to the

public, and that wineries are currently focused on increasing sanitation.

"From my perspective we'll continue to focus on guest experiences and enhancing on-site sanitization programs, while following the lead of local health authorities," Niven said, in an email response to questions from The Lake Report.

"That being said, we have seen an increase in online orders and will look to shift some of our marketing dollars towards our online channel."



Police operations will not change due to COVID-19 situation. FILE PHOTO/DARIYA BAIGUZHIEVA

State of emergency won't affect police operations, says chief

Richard Harley
 The Lake Report

Niagara Regional Police chief Bryan MacCulloch says the state of emergency in Ontario and province-wide closures amidst the COVID-19 pandemic will not affect police operations.

"While the (emergency) declaration has wide-reaching effects and will no doubt assist in containing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, I wanted to assure our community that this declaration does not mean a change to our police operations," MacCulloch said in a media release Tuesday.

"As an essential service, the community will continue to see our officers on patrol and can still expect a response to their calls for assistance."

He said police districts will remain open, though members of the public are being asked to consider alternatives such as online

processes for reporting crime, obtaining record checks, copies of reports, record suspensions, fingerprint destruction, etc.

"We are following medical direction in terms of best practice for personal protective equipment for our members and continue to echo the recommendations of health officials to follow proper hygiene and practice social distancing," MacCulloch said.

"This is a rapidly changing situation that we are continuing to evolve and adapt to, but I can assure the residents of Niagara, that the Niagara Regional Police Service is committed to ensuring their continued safety. I am immensely proud of our members, both sworn and civilian, for their professionalism and dedication as we work through the unprecedented impact that COVID-19 both is having on our community in Niagara and around the world."

PUBLIC NOTICE

Niagara Region Woodland By-law Review Notice of Cancellation of Public Information Centres

Due to the temporary closure of public facilities, the following Public Information Centres for the Woodland By-law Review have been cancelled:

- **Tuesday, March 24** at Wellandport Community Centre, 5024 Canborough Rd., West Lincoln
- **Wednesday, March 25** at Niagara Region headquarters (cafeteria), 1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold
- **Monday, March 30** at Gale Centre, 5152 Thorold Stone Rd., Niagara Falls
- **Tuesday, March 31** at Vale Health and Wellness Centre, 550 Elizabeth St., Port Colborne

For additional information visit niagararegion.ca and search Woodland By-law Review or contact woodlandreview@niagararegion.ca.

NOTL businesses taking measures to adapt to life with COVID-19

Continued from Front Page

permitted in the building.” Patrons can phone in their orders and staff will deliver to them in the parking lot. Silversmith CEO Kyle Getty said that “between the government announcement and our social obligation to everyone’s safety, we’ve decided to close our tap room.”

“We are going to be doing retail bottles only, so we are still open for retail service through the front door and we’re working on a delivery model. If there’s a need we have the opportunity to provide beer to people, should they want it.”

The Virgil brewery will continue to produce product and maintain its “high standards of cleanliness and sanitizing things to the maximum.”

“This isn’t to be taken lightly. I’m very concerned about the long-term impacts to tourism in Niagara generally, not just for Silver-smith,” Getty said.

He sees COVID-19 as “a massive blow to the income for all tourism-based industries in this area.”

“The only thing I can really impress on everybody is just to support your local small business,” Getty said. “Whether it be a brewery, a coffee shop, a bookstore or craft store, just support your local businesses.”

Eliminating cash sales, unless absolutely necessary, and handling all cash with gloves are some of the precautions taken by businesses like Brims & Things.

The Queen Street store has made available gloves and alcohol wipes for customers to use in store if they feel the need.

“We are doing the best we can,” Brims & Things employee Lynda Pecchia said. “We are looking out for them as much as they’re looking out for us. People need to look out for one another in these times.”

Customer traffic was definitely down last weekend, Pecchia said, but the

shop was still seeing people from Toronto, Hamilton and the United States looking to get out of the house.

Some customers have said that they are more inclined to come to Queen Street to shop because they’re able to walk outside, avoid crowded shops and many businesses are keeping their doors open to allow fresh air inside.

Anita Bates, an employee at the Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe, said business has been “way down.”

“I think it’s going to get worse,” she said, noting the one good thing is there’s been a lot of local support.

St. Catharines residents Mandi Gould and Geoff Holmes are spending their time “getting out of the house while they can” by supporting local businesses.

“I think everybody could use a little support right now,” Gould said. “We’re being careful, you know, hand washing and using gloves on doors.”

“My YMCA closed and I’m a bit bummed about that, but it was bound to happen.”

Grape Escape Wine Tours co-owner and manager Richard Mell said March is typically the quietest month for his business, but he is taking steps to help combat the potential spread of COVID-19.

“We’re suspending operations for a number of reasons but obviously most of the wineries seem to be closing,” Mell said. “We’re going to play it on a two-week basis. Between now and March 31 we will be suspending operations.”

“We really need a point where the wineries can reopen. Obviously without the wineries we have nowhere to go.”

Services offered by Grape Escape including tours, Wellness Escape classes and the escape room will be closed until the end of the month.

“Things seem to be changing so quickly so that’s why we don’t want to commit to a shorter time or

bigger time frame,” Mell said. “We feel like two weeks at a time is adequate to be able to make accurate assessments of where we need to be.”

Grape Escape is encouraging people to reschedule by offering an incentive, a bottle of VQA wine, as a “thank you for rescheduling” as opposed to cancelling.

“We in turn can go buy a bottle of wine from a local winery. So that supports them,” Mell said. “There are some people that are travelling from abroad and obviously just can’t reschedule, so we’ve reached a point where they will have to be credited back.”

Mell hopes it’s not too long before things return to normal.

“In my eyes, if people are going to be locked away for the next two to four weeks – as soon as the sun starts to shine and if they have been locked-up – I can see business potentially increasing for the summer season.”

He said the way through this situation is “together as a community.”

“Being a small community like we are, people will really look out for each other. I know we’ve tried to look out for others in the past so we hope it will pay forward and come back to us,” Mell said.

The Scottish Loft in Niagara-on-the-Lake is now offering free delivery in Niagara for items over \$20 before tax and will not be changing its hours of operation, said owner Simon Bentall. Orders in all areas of NOTL will be delivered daily while all other parts of Niagara will be delivered Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Caroline Cellars’ front of house and event manager Justine Lakeit said the winery has closed its Farmhouse cafe and opted not to do takeout. The winery will remain open for purchases only through the wine boutique, but it is not offering tastings now due to



Top: NOTL resident Terry Frawley and his dog Saorise keeping up with their daily visits to the Queen Street Starbucks. Bottom: Silversmith Brewery is packing up cases of beer to be picked up during the closure of bars and restaurants. The business’ retail store is still open and the brewery is offering delivery. JESSICA MAXWELL

extra sanitation required.

“We have also offered options on our online store for people to order online and pick up in store,” Lakeit said. “So if customers do really want to limit their interactions with others, they can order online and we can pack it up and just have it ready for them to pick up at their convenience.”

“We were hoping to operate as normal as usual for as long as we could especially with all of our local customers who are great to us during the winter months and slower months,” Lakeit said. “We really rely on and appreciate their business during the winter months so we wanted to stay open for them as long as we can.”

“If this happened in the middle of July it would have much more of an impact on our business. But if we know now that tourism will be slower in the upcoming months, we can staff accordingly and plan accordingly,” she said.

Laura Sentineal, co-owner of Sentineal Carriages, said the carriages are still operating, but staff are taking extra measures to lower risks.

“We have removed our blankets and are sanitizing the carriage in between guests. As always, our tours are private,” she said.

“Overall, with our situation, it poses little risk to our guests and staff. However, I have made (working) voluntary for our staff,” Sentineal said.

She said it’s too early to tell how the pandemic will affect business. “As many businesses will tell you, March is not really a busy time anyway. We have had a few cancellations.”

She said she is hoping “this is all done” by May.

City Sight Seeing bus driver Steven Hsueh said some people are cancelling tours due to COVID-19, but last weekend it didn’t have much impact on his tour bus.

“Because we are one of the few companies that still operates in Niagara Falls, we still get people. Not as many, but we still get people.”

Usually the bus hosts 50 people. It still had 44 on Sunday’s visit to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

“Because of all the things happening I think things might start changing, especially this summer. I don’t think there is going to be a lot of tourists compared to previous years,” Hsueh said.

Niagara Fit owner Jaclyn Willms said her business is only running one-on-one classes right now, giving clients the option to take classes through video chat and has cancelled its Fitteste lunch menu until April 6.

And the TD Niagara Jazz Festival has moved its “Jazzy-oke Sing-a-long Sundays” at Club 55 to March 29 from March 15 to avoid people sharing microphones.



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Gail Kendall in Bali. Find more Hometown Traveller stories at www.niagaranow.com SUPPLIED/GAIL KENDALL

Hometown Traveller COVID-19: 'Stuck' in Bali and trying to get home to NOTL

Kevin MacLean
Managing Editor

Should I stay or should I go?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has told Canadians travelling abroad that "it is time to come home."

But as many travellers are discovering, and writing about on social media, getting home in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic is easier said than done.

Some travellers are being quoted sky-high prices for flights home, if they can find one with seats available.

Queenston's Gail Kendall has been on holiday in Ubud, Bali, since March 12 and is scheduled to arrive home on March 24.

Bali is 12 hours ahead of NOTL and she learned early Tuesday that Trudeau was urging everyone to come home.

So she "made the deci-

sion to honour the request of my prime minister and return home, however, it's not that easy.

When you're half a world away in Indonesia, things can get complicated, she told The Lake Report in an interview via email.

"I booked directly with Air Canada and apparently it's required that I speak with them, which means many hours on hold," she said.

"I am having no luck getting through to Air Canada in Toronto and Jakarta. I think they should have a designated line for those of us abroad."

Kendall, who works as a docent and host at the Shaw Festival, is also a volunteer with the TD Jazz Festival when she is home. She also helps moderate the NOTL Today Facebook group and administers the NOTL Bulletin Board group.

She is travelling with a

tour group that includes a lot of Americans, many of whom have very different concerns.

"They don't really know if they can get back or not," Kendall said. "They don't know what airports are open or closed."

She really would like to make the long trip home – from Denpasar, the capital of Bali, to Singapore to London and, finally, Toronto – but there remains a lot of uncertainty.

"My concern about staying is not being able to get home. My concern about coming home is the fact I am in a healthy country with very low numbers of infection. I am going home to a dead zone and self-isolation."

The pandemic is a worry in Bali, she said, "and tourism is obviously down, but they were proactive and were screening and

testing people. Each resort we have visited or stayed at they take our temperatures first."

Meanwhile, she said she is well aware about how serious the situation is "but the more I visited social media the more people were becoming panicked, hysterical and judgmental."

"It's not easy gaining proper info at the other side of the world and certainly not easy contacting the proper resources either," she said.

She is trying hard to get home to NOTL either before or on her planned return date.

Are you a NOTLer travelling abroad or know someone who is? Contact The Lake Report to share your story. Email: kevin@niagaranow.com. Please write "COVID traveller" in the subject field.

People from Niagara-on-the-Lake travel to some of the most interesting places on Earth and we'd like to hear about your vacations.

So, if you have ever wanted to be a travel writer, here is your chance. Send us a travelogue story about your vacation, along with some photos.

It's impossible to include everything, but stories ideally should be 250 to 600 words and focus on a unique, quirky or particularly interesting aspect of your trip. It can be about a vacation you have just taken, one you're on now (lucky you!), or a holiday you took a few years ago.

Sometimes, just a picture is worth a thousand words. So, if you aren't able to write a story about your trip, send us two or three snapshots from your holiday and we will try to publish some of them.

In all cases, smartphone photos are perfectly acceptable. Just make sure each digital image you send us is around 1 to 2 MB in size. Include destination information and the names (from left) of everyone in each photo. And tell us who took the photo, if possible.

As a bonus, bring along a copy of The Lake Report and include it in your photo!

Send your stories and photos to editor@niagaranow.com and be sure to write TRAVEL in the subject line.

Happy trails.



Tarot of the week

Lisa Tache/Special

DATE: March 19, 2020

In this card we see you are taking a new path in life and starting off in a different direction. Basically, you are looking for something

that is more satisfying. Focus more on your desire than on your doubt, and the dream will take care of itself. This is an important growth lesson in your life. The Eight of Cups suggests you sense that something is missing. You've outgrown the current situation. Instead of waiting around for things to get better, you know you need to move on. The Eight of Cups can be a sign that you are trying to escape an emotional situation or avoiding some major issues and concerns. It may not make sense to others but, deep down, you know it's not serving you well, and it's time for you to let it go and move on. The Eight of Cups invites you to ask yourself what brings you happiness, peace and satisfaction on a deeper level.

RIDDLE ME THIS

If you lose me you may cause people around me to lose me too.
What am I?

Last Week: I am black when you buy me, red when you use me and gray when you throw me away. What am I?

Answer: Charcoal

Answered first by: Kathy Neufeld

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Quinn Tiller, Sue Davies, Margaret Garaughty, Susan Pohorly, Pam Dowling, Lida Kowal, Margie Enns, Gary Davis, Dave Jones, Sylvia Wiens, Sheila Meloche, Danielle Gault, Veronica Galajda, Susan Hamilton, Terrie Courtlander, Janice Hall, Paul O'Connor and Melissa Rocchi, Katie Reimer, Lynda Collet, Christine Yakymishen, Chirl Gyurko

Email answers, with your name, to editor@niagaranow.com for a chance to win a prize.


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A season to remember



The Niagara North Stars celebrate their Game 5 playoff-clinching win at home against the Buffalo Regals. The victory qualified them for the OMHA finals in Belleville and a chance at playing in the OHL Cup. SUPPLIED

COVID-19 pandemic slams the door on talented Niagara North hockey team's dream year

Kevin MacLean
Managing editor

One of the most talented and successful Niagara youth hockey teams in recent memory saw its season come to a crashing halt last week, thanks to the COVID-19 epidemic.

The Niagara North Stars minor midget AAA team was one of the top five teams in the Ontario Minor Hockey Association and competed in the league championship in Belleville March 6 to 8.

The players' performance there earned them the chance to compete for a "win and you're in" wild card berth in the prestigious OHL Cup tournament, a showcase for the 20 top under-16 teams from Ontario and the northern United States.

All of that ended with the pandemic declaration last Wednesday and the cancellation of the OHL Cup the next day.

"We are the first Niagara North minor midget AAA team in 10 seasons to make it to the OMHA finals, so having the OHL Cup cancelled is a huge frustration for our players," says head coach Matt Miller, a realtor with Royal LePage's Miller Group in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"Our whole season was focused on making it to the OHL Cup," says Miller, 31. "Tournaments, the league standings were all secondary to getting to the OHL Cup."

The season was a monumental success for the team, led by top scorer Tai York of St. Davids.

A sixth-place team last

season as bantams, they rocketed into second place in their division under Miller in his first year as head coach.

The OHL Cup features the best young hockey players from AAA teams, the top tier in minor hockey. It's also a scouting showcase, where players are evaluated by top scouts from the Ontario Hockey League, junior leagues, colleges and elsewhere, in advance of the annual junior draft on April 4.

The tournament, which would have started Wednesday, was the last chance for players to be evaluated before the draft, but Miller is confident that six or more kids from his team – including York – will be drafted.

Every year the OHL Cup includes dozens of players who go on to careers

in major junior hockey and several prospects who land in the NHL and other pro leagues.

Edmonton Oilers superstar Connor McDavid is one of the biggest pro names to play in the tournament. And 15 players on this past season's Niagara IceDogs roster were past participants in the showcase.

The Lake Report has been following the Stars' fortunes since last fall as they set out in their quest for minor hockey's big prize.

A key round-robin playoff game on a snowy Feb. 1 in Fonthill against an opponent this Stars team has only beaten once is an apt metaphor for this hungry group of under-16 kids.

There might be no superstars among them, but their hearts are huge and they Never. Give. Up.

It's the sort of situation that could make or break a team – or its coach.

Win and besides beating a team that seems to always have your number, you have a shot at being seeded first in the next playoff round. Lose and your eyes forever might be in the rear-view mirror hoping one of the teams behind you doesn't catch up.

The home team – the Welland-based Southern Tier Admirals, first place this year and silver medalists last year in the OMHA bantam championships – has just scored back-to-back goals to go up 4-2 late in the third period.

With 3:37 to play, that last marker was batted out of the air in a fine feat of hand-eye co-ordination. "High stick, high stick!"

the livid Niagara North bench screams.

There's no video in minor hockey, eh, and even sitting 30 feet away it's hard to tell if former Stars player Dawson Lukey's stick was above the crossbar. But it was reallllly close.

Doesn't matter, the disputed goal stands. For many teams, that's just the beginning of the end. But these Stars are workers and it's time to get back to work.

Forty-six seconds later, Southern Tier's talented Andrew Leblanc takes an unwise roughing penalty.

Timeout Niagara North with 2:51 on the clock. Coach Miller has the boys huddle around, Xs and Os time. He cajoles and exhorts his charges.

This is where a coach can

Continued on Page 15



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COVID-19 stops hockey team's season in tracks

Continued from Page 14

earn his or her stripes. But what do you say to these kids that can make a difference? Everyone knows the score. Everyone knows what needs to be done. Everyone wants a goal. So, well, just do it.

Faceoff in the other team's zone, Niagara North dominates on the power play and just 21 seconds later, sniper York works his magic yet again, from Wyatt Gibson and Derek Smyth. And it's 4-3.

Sometimes in sport momentum changes are palpable. You literally can feel the energy transfer from one team to the other. That wave just rolled through Fonthill's Meridian Centre and everyone knows what could happen next.

Now, there's 2:30 left and a game that looked like it was over moments ago is very much game-on.

Puck drops. "Gib, Yorky, Shorty" – even at this level, the coaches have nicknames for their players. Miller has already caught his goaltender's attention. "Watch me," he mouths, two fingers pointed toward his own eyes.



Niagara North Stars head coach Matt Miller. KEVIN MACLEAN

Niagara North gets the puck in deep and seconds later, the goalie's out and a sixth man joins the attack.

Scoring can happen in bunches in minor hockey and the tsunami of energy the Stars are riding again overwhelms the bigger Admirals. Size doesn't

matter. York, not a big guy, but still growing, has a deft, dangerous touch. Never shying away from "the kitchen," as Miller calls it, York in close finds a hole, as pure goal scorers are wont to do, and slides the puck home.

Quite a comeback in less

than two minutes of playing time. The game is tied and there's still 1:04 to play.

The clock winds down but it's not over. Ten minutes of overtime looms. A chance for "sudden victory."

The pace is frenetic. Up and down. Now, everyone is energized.

Not long into OT, a neutral zone turnover and speedy Niagara North turns the puck up ice on a potential 3 on 1. As the puck carrier reaches the red line an oncoming Admiral defender realizes he is moving in the wrong direction and reflexively sticks out his leg.

Shin guard on knee, the Niagara North player tumbles to the ice. He's OK, but there is a nuclear explosion on the visitors' bench.

The normally laid-back Miller grabs a stick and smacks it hard against the boards. "That was a knee. That was a ... knee." The back ref missed it and his partner was looking elsewhere. No penalty. Play continues.

Uh-oh. Southern Tier finds the net. But wait, the net was knocked off long before the puck went in. No goal.

Back and forth and back. Then somehow the puck finds York. He finds a seam and breaks in alone. Could it happen? He dangles the defence and cuts hard to the net. He fans on it. "But I should have scored on that one," the Grade 10 student says later. Close but no joy.

There's 1:31 left but no one is able to score and the game ends 4-4. Spectators seem exhausted – and they were just watching.

"We just can't seem to beat this team," Miller shrugs as he heads to the dressing room.

No, they didn't win, but the Stars showed again why they are among the top teams in their age group – anywhere. Why they deserve a shot at the OHL Cup.

For the boys there will be another six weeks of intense, high-level playoff hockey before their season unceremoniously screeches to a halt. For them, it makes a season to remember even more memorable. Unfortunately.

For Miller, it's the beginning of a new chapter. He's been appointed head coach of the under-16 AAA team again next year, the bantams who are moving up. He'll have his work cut out for him, though. The bantams were 7-18-7 on the season and finished second last, in ninth place.

It's another chance for the coach to earn his stripes.



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Farmers **advocate** for government to let workers into country

Continued from Front Page

arrive from mid-March until the first and second weeks of April.

“By that time everybody is here,” he said.

Now with the border ban, things are going to be “disastrous.”

“Our timetable is very, very short for working. So the guys get here then start right into pruning for grapes. As soon as they finish pruning they’re tying for peaches or tender fruit.

Once they finish pruning, they’re straight into thinning. Because you can’t put Mother Nature on hold, and those are very, very small windows that they have.”

“There’s no lag time in between,” he said. They finish one job and get to the next job. We’re generally just finishing or just a little behind all the time. We always work with a bitter urgency, because if you add in a few rain dates here and there, it’s a concern.”

“It’s a well-oiled machine, as long as you don’t throw in a pandemic.”

He said there’s a sense of urgency among farmers right now, and he hopes the

government will relent when it realizes all these offshore workers are coming in – and needed.

“You probably hear some urgency in my voice. I’m quite concerned because my guys (were supposed to be) coming in 10 days. I would love to have them today if I could get them,” he said.

“I think the biggest worry is getting everybody here right now. And what are we going to do?” he said.

“I’ve got very little information.”

Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services, known as F.A.R.M.S., is a non-profit that was incorporated in 1987 to facilitate and co-ordinate the processing of requests for foreign seasonal agricultural workers.

The organization said it is “devastated” by the news of the border restrictions.

“F.A.R.M.S. is working with other industry partners to do everything possible to try and change the minds of those behind this decision,” the agency said in a message to agricultural employers Monday night.

As well, the Migrant Rights Network is oppos-



Migrant farm workers are not being allowed into Canada, causing trouble for the industry. FILE PHOTO/TIM TAYLOR

ing the border closure and criticizing the government for allowing Canadian and American citizens without symptoms to enter the country at the time of reporting.

“There is no public health reason to shut out non-permanent residents, while allowing American and Canadian citizens and permanent residents in. This is simply racism,” the organization said on Twitter.

“The economic impact of this decision will gravely hurt racialized, low-waged migrants around the world.”

Further complicating things for farmworkers, if they do arrive, is a lack of essential goods at some grocery stores.

essential resources in stores, such as food and toilet paper.

“What I can say is that we are so glad we planned ahead with having one roll of toilet paper in each of the welcome kits,” Andres said Monday in an email response to questions from The Lake Report.

“The men who arrived this past week were unable to buy the essentials because of the stores being sold out. They don’t have the privilege of shopping around and had to come home from the grocery store with little to no meat or protein and, of course, no toilet paper. Doing physical labour without adequate nutrition or having proper hygiene products is going to be an added layer of challenges.”

She echoed concerns for the farming community at large.

“The timing of the outbreak is a serious challenge for the farmers. They can’t afford to get behind on their pruning and thinning. It affects everything down the line.”

In a phone interview, Andres said it’s lucky that her group Niagara Workers

Welcome had toilet paper in the farmworker welcome kits they distribute.

“The ones that we did deliver welcome kits to last week, they were so appreciative because they had gone to get groceries and there was no toilet paper to be had, so each welcome kit has got one roll. So something we kind of take for granted was a big deal for those guys.”

“You don’t think about that when you’re putting the kits together,” she said. “That was really an important thing to include this year.”

She said there are other things they simply can’t help with though, like food shortages.

“But other things you can’t help them with, I mean other shortages, like groceries. The guys who came in last week couldn’t find meat. Well, what are you going to do when you’re working eight- or 10-hour days in the cold?”

“We’re thinking that maybe it was just a bad week last week and things will improve as people realize there’s no need to panic and hoard.”

PUBLIC NOTICE

Town Administration Buildings Close To The Public

For Immediate Release March 16, 2020

Niagara-on-the-Lake - Keeping in line with measures being taken by the Province, effective immediately, all Town Administration Buildings are closed to the public.

As a result, all public and Committee meetings, including Committee of the Whole, have been cancelled. The Town Council Meeting scheduled for March 30, 2020, remains scheduled but is subject to further notice. Postponement notices will be circulated once new dates have been confirmed.

This announcement is in follow up to Friday’s notice advising of Town facility closures. These decisions are necessary based on the demographic of our population and the risk of a human health emergency as a result COVID-19. This closure will assist in

protecting the health and well-being of our residents and staff.

Despite this closure, Town staff will remain available to assist and serve citizens online and over the phone. Our phones will continue to be answered between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM Monday to Friday (905-468-3266), and online service requests will remain available at www.notl.com.

We want to thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding. All new updates from the Town will continue to be posted online on the Town’s social media pages and website. Hard copies will also be posted at Town Administration Buildings, and all local Post Offices. For all Town updates and additional informative resources, please visit www.notl.com/COVID-19.

Phone: 905-468-3266
Fax: 905-468-2959
E-mail: info@notl.com

