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February/March 2021

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Lakehead University launching Wellness Strategy to support students, faculty and staff

—submitted

Lakehead University is launching its first Wellness Strategy on Monday, Jan. 25, acknowledging nine dimensions of wellness and describing a plan to support the wellness needs of students, faculty, and staff.

The plan's mission is to embed systemic health and wellness practices and services into the University, to support the well-being of the communities where faculty, staff and students work, study and live.

"Through the Wellness Strategy, we are furthering our commitment to support the holistic health and well-being of our Lakehead community, recognizing that investing in the enhancement of health and wellness will better position our students for success in the classroom and as they enter the workforce upon graduation," said Andrea Tarsitano, Vice-Provost, Students, and Registrar.

The development of Lakehead University's Wellness Strategy has been influenced and supported by Lakehead University's current Strategic Plan, Academic Plan, and Research Plan, all of which contributed to the objectives, metrics and strategies described in the plan.

It was also developed after consulting with members of the University community who provided feedback on what they hoped to see in the plan.

"The launch of our Wellness Strategy represents a seminal moment for our Lakehead community in striving toward our vision of an inclusive University that supports the diverse and shared wellness needs of our students, staff, and faculty," said Adam Shaen, Associate Vice-President, Office of Human Resources.

The strategy acknowledges the following dimensions of wellness: social, physical, occupational, intellectual, financial, environmental, emotional, cultural, and spiritual.

Living a healthy and well-balanced lifestyle is even more important since COVID-19 arrived in Canada last year.

Some of the plan's objectives include embedding the wellness of students into the onboarding and orientation of new faculty and staff hires, developing more web resources to increase understanding of the services and supports available to students, and applying a health and wellness lens into the Facilities Master Plan highlighting the importance of light, windows, open communal spaces, etc.

Educational institutions across Canada have been advancing their overall perspectives on wellness over the past decade. In 2015, the Okanagan Charter was developed, calling on post-secondary institutions to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health promotion action and collaboration both locally and globally.

On March 20, 2019, Lakehead University

marked the official beginning of its commitment towards the development of a Wellness Strategy that would support, encourage and inspire a culture of holistic health and well-being for the Lakehead community.

Lakehead Thunder Bay and Lakehead Orillia hosted kick-off events called Our Trail to Wellness and the Okanagan Charter was officially signed by Dr. Moira McPherson, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Dr. Dean Jobin-Bevans, Principal of Lakehead Orillia.

To view the Wellness Strategy, visit www.lakeheadu.ca/trailtowellness.



Gratitude by Anna Proctor

Hello and welcome to our February/March 2021 issue. My mind keeps going back to last year at this time, when Steve and I were taking three weeks to put together our print edition issue, as per usual, then getting ready to prep it for Canada Post to distribute throughout Oro-Medonte and the North Simcoe area. Little did we know how our publication, and the world, would be turned upside down shortly thereafter. Our April/May 2020 issue was the last one that we printed and mailed out, ever.

Nowadays, we turn NS life around in two weeks from deadline and post it online and share it to everyone who is interested. We have a robust mailing list, and tons of engagement through Facebook and our website, when we announce each new issue. Going online has enabled us not to go under, as the pandemic drags on, small businesses suffer, advertising monies decrease, and events continue to be non-existent.

We are grateful for technology in these changed times, and the ability to still bring local, good news to our communities. We are very grateful for the new writers who stepped up to join our regular columnists, and grateful for our regular advertisers who are staying with us, despite uncertainty.

What else are we grateful for, as we head into the second year of COVID-19? We are grateful to have warm, comfortable houses to work and play in. We are grateful for our live-in companions, as our in-person social lives outside of our own homes shrink more with each



photo by Xavier Fernandes



photo by Candy Potter

lock-down and stay-at-home order.

We are grateful to have technology to be able to stay in touch with friends and loved ones around the world and closer to home. I personally have become much closer with my siblings through this lockdown, as we have an extended family virtual meeting each week and spend an hour just chatting and laughing together. Worth the year-long Zoom subscription for sure!

We are very grateful to live in such a beautiful area, with plenty of room and opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. Our local lakes in particular have turned into such beautiful winter wonderlands, with ice fishing, skiing, snowshoeing, skating, and kite boarding happening every day all over them. So much extra space to enjoy and explore!

I know there is so much stress and uncertainty still. When will we all be vaccinated? Will the current vaccines hold against the mutating strains of this deadly virus? How many more people will we lose? How much more will our lives change? When will we see our loved ones again? When will life return to "normal"?

Our best way forward through this scary and uncertain time is to try and be grateful for what we have, to trust in the experts, and to do the best we can, with what we have. Look after ourselves and try and stay positive. Reach out when we need to. Help others when we can. We really are all in this together, everywhere. Let's hold onto that and always be kind. Enjoy our winter wonderland and we will reach the springtime together.

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HAPPY READING!

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Doug Downey MPP

During the pandemic, many horse experience related activities, such as riding schools, trail ride operations, and horse camps, have been unable to operate. The disruption of these activities is causing challenges for horse experience operators in caring for their animals this winter.

The Equine Hardship Program, launching on January 18, 2021, will provide individual businesses offering horse related experiences up to \$2,500 per horse up to a maximum of \$20,000 in financial support to help cover direct costs for feed, water, veterinary care, and farrier services to maintain their horses' health and well-being.

Horse experience businesses will be eligible for funding if they earned at least 50 per cent of their revenue in 2019 from horse experience activities, their 2020 revenue was less than half of what was earned in 2019 due to the pandemic, and they attest they are facing hardship as a result to COVID-19 that will make it difficult to care for the horses.

The Equine Hardship Program was specifically designed for horse experience businesses that are not eligible for other agriculture related programs that help farmers manage risk, such as the Risk Management Program and AgriStability.

The funding is in addition to the government initiatives launched this year to assist the agriculture sector in meeting challenges related to the COVID-19 outbreak, including:

- The \$25.5 million Agri-food Prevention and Control Innovation Program to help reduce disruptions in business operations and risks of COVID-19 exposure in the workplace
- The launch of a portal to connect farms and other agri-food sector business with labour needs to job seekers
- The creation of a \$26.6 million Enhanced Agri-food Workplace Protection Program in partnership with the federal government
- The investment of an additional \$50 million into the Risk Management Program for 2020, one year earlier than originally promised

Eady News by Evelyn Reid

One could not have imagined last November that the world would have changed so much by this February. The 2020 election in the U.S. voted in a new President, the Capitol Hill riots, which we all watched in disbelief occurred, the inauguration took place with astounding security having to be put in place throughout the U.S., and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rampage throughout Canada and the world, taking the lives of thousands. We have seen the pandemic worsen in our province and our local area with many nursing home residents in Barrie and Orillia getting the virus and unfortunately, dying. Luckily, I do not know of any community residents here in Eady who have come in contact with the virus.

While the world news has been lots, we in Eady have very little to report. Many residents continue to work from home and no-one is allowed to visit with

anyone and no events are happening. Our sympathies go out to the family of Arleen Millard who passed away in early January. Arleen and her husband had formerly been a resident of Moonstone, and Arleen was a member of the Eady U.C.W. She was a retired nurse and was also a member of the OSMH Nurses Alumnae.

Our roads are busy with people out walking every day and it has been a mild December and January, so it has made walking good for people. There has been the odd snowmobile out and about as well.

Back in my school days, I don't remember a lot of walking in the winter, but I do remember snowshoeing to Carley School each day from our home on the 8th concession. Of course, the roads were not ploughed, as no one had vehicles in those days, and we use to get a lot more snow than what we get now. I would snowshoe about one and a half miles each way to school, and we would all leave our snowshoes stuck in the snowbanks outside

while we were in school. Our teacher would stoke the fire to keep the school warm for us.

On the days when it was really cold or stormy my father would take me to school with the team of horses and the cutter. I also remember one time when my father was taking myself and my cousin to school with the team of horses when suddenly the horses bolted for the ditch, and one of our horses dropped dead. That scared the daylights out of myself and my cousin as we were quite young! We both scrambled up a tree to stay out of the road until my father got control of the other horse and got the cutter unhitched and out of the ditch. He then had to coax us out of the tree! I remember then having to walk to school the rest of the way that day. Things sure have changed since those school days. There were no such things as school buses to pick you up and take you to and from school, and there certainly weren't any school days missed due to a snow-storm!



Quick Facts:

- There are approximately 150 horse experience businesses in Ontario, including more than 50 horse camp or trail ride operations, at least 15 carriage operators, at least 14 therapeutic riding centres and many riding schools. These businesses also include horse drawn carriage or sleigh rides.
- Under the Equine Hardship Program, costs incurred

between March 17, 2020 and February 28, 2021 will be eligible. Enrolment and claim forms will be accepted until March 12, 2021, or while program funding remains available, whichever comes first.

- Eligible business owners may be provided up to \$20,000 (total) to maintain horses used to provide these experiences. A cap of \$2,500 per eligible animal will be applied.

THE 2021 RUN OR WALK TO IGNITE POTENTIAL

—submitted



Entry includes a completion medal and T-shirt!

Looking to jumpstart your resolution? Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orillia & District (BBBSOD) is announcing its inaugural Run to Ignite Potential! Partnered with Race Roster, BBBSOD has created the event with the current climate in mind, they are excited to deliver an exciting and interactive experience for participants.

The race, beginning February 1st and wrapping up February 28th, allows participants to complete either a 5k run or 3k family walk of their choosing. Individuals can register anytime throughout the month so long as they submit their results before the final day. Race swag will be mailed to each runner, including a T-shirt and completion medal. In order to make the experience as interactive as possible, BBBSOD will be hosting Facebook Opening and Closing ceremonies, and results will be posted in real time!

“We are really excited that this event provides a space for our participants to connect online during a time when many of us may be feeling isolated,” says Executive Director Miranda Chaffey. “We hope a little friendly competition will go a long way in

REGISTRATION OPEN!

bringing our participants together, while also supporting our organization.” Prizes are to be awarded to top runners, top walkers, and top fundraisers. Who will raise the most and take home the ultimate victory?

“The lockdowns have been difficult on everyone,” says Fundraising and Events Coordinator Leslie Adlam. “We have had to reimagine our fundraising efforts many times over, and we are really excited to get The 2021 Run or Walk to Ignite Potential going.” BBBSOD usually relies on four core fundraisers each year, Bowling, Curling, Golf and Hockey. Like so many non-profits, three out of four have had to be cancelled. “It’s been a challenge we’ve risen up to,” states Adlam. “We have seen the profound impact mentoring has had on our youth throughout this pandemic, and that is enough inspiration for us to keep going.”

To register for the 2021 Run or Walk to Ignite Potential visit BBBSOD’s website here: <https://orillia.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/event/the-2021-run-to-ignite-potential/>. It’s time to #RuntoIgnitePotential!

Jill Dunlop, MPP Simcoe North

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Congratulations to Marilyn Martin of Oro-Medonte, winner of our Winter Wonderland Photo Contest. This photo was taken in Marilyn's backyard. The fresh fall of snow, the lighting and the cuteness of the shed all combined to make the perfect winter wonderland shot! Congratulations Marilyn!



photo by Deb Halbot

Digressions

by D'reen by Doreen Uren Simmons

Well now...how are you doing? A brand new year eh? 2021! What's that you say? No different than 2020, which was horrible? Well now...I can see why you feel that way. I don't need to enumerate the bad things, but let's see if I can come up with a few suggestions for feeling better.

Actually, as I look out the window, the sun is shining, which it has been doing for the last several days, and...it is now setting after 5 pm! How's that?! And, there have not been, so far, at least here in Toronto, any of the big dumps of snow that we usually experience in Ontario winters. We love the gentle light snowfalls that make our world pretty. And, next month my friend in England will have hundreds of wild daffodils around her acreage and will send pictures. Take it where you can find it!

The vaccine is here, and while there will be distribution problems for sure, there's finally hope, after a whole year. We have been stalwart and determined and bored and depressed, but just maybe, we have found resources we didn't know we had.

Politically, forgetting the horrors of January 6th, things are getting unbelievably better south of the border. A new slogan? Better With Biden! Let's join hands, figuratively, with our friends in the U.S., and pray for the restorative justice they so badly need.

The previous suggestions were the more universal ones. On the small home front, we are well and becoming totally adjusted to the new 'norm'. We are getting better at the crosswords and the jumbles, cooking more creatively, and revelling in All Creatures Great And Small! I have found a new source for jigsaws. It's called Bits and Pieces.

They are pleasant and challenging and cheap. And are shipped from...wait for it...West Lorne Ontario!

How am I doing on the cheer front? Seriously dear ones, we have come this far and need to congratulate ourselves and move forward with faith and positivity. 2021 will, ultimately, be better...and so will we. Much love, and See You In The Spring!

Photo by Magda Ehlers from Pexels

COMMUNITY HEROES by Emily DiLeccce

Maureen Rooney, Pediatric RN

"Behind every mask, there's a story..."

These are the wise words said by Pediatric RN, Maureen Rooney. For the past nine months, she has been working as a COVID-19 screener at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital (OSMH). However, her regular job for the past three years has been in the pediatric unit at Soldiers'. With over 25 years of nursing experience, working across the United States and Canada, Maureen says she and her colleagues haven't experienced anything quite like the COVID-19 pandemic before.

I recently had a chance to connect with Maureen to chat about the recent release of her book, *A Child's Night Cap*, which dives into her life journey as a childhood abuse survivor and her experiences working as a travelling nurse over the past several decades. Her story is an incredible adventure from working as a travelling nurse in California, to venturing to Canada and working in remote First Nations communities in Northern Ontario. She says she wrote the book to inspire others and remind them that, "through resilience, there is hope".

Maureen originally moved to Orillia for its convenient proximity to the Toronto airport, great for commuting back and

forth to the northern communities. However, she quickly learned how much she enjoyed living in and exploring the region and decided to relocate to our local hospital, OSMH. When asked why she decided to stay in Orillia and not choose a different community, she mentioned how much she enjoys how locally oriented Orillia is, her love for our area's businesses/organizations, and the hospital's incredible pediatrics unit.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it was a tremendous stress for the medical community as they rushed to prepare for the influx of traffic that would be going through, not to mention the scheduled procedures taking place. Maureen said it is with the local community's support, patience, and kindness to medical staff that they have been able to get through this.

"We are all under a lot of pressure, including the patients and their families." Maureen said the most important part of her job, aside from safety and efficiency, is taking time to talk to the patients so she can relate to what they are going through. Everyone is feeling high tensions, fear, and stress, and she tries to reduce it as much as possible when they enter her screening station.

Nurses like Maureen are the pillars holding up our community by working on the front line and helping keep us safe. We are lucky to have them, so remember to show some love to your local healthcare workers!

If you are interested in learning more about Maureen's story, I highly recommend checking out her book *A Child's Night Cap: My Soul's Survival Story*, available now on Amazon, www.amazon.ca/Childs-Nightcap-Souls-Survival-Story/dp/1777451809.



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Life Stories by Sandy Falcon

It is a cold and snowy Saturday afternoon. I have finished my first grad studies semester! Woohoo! It was challenging but oh, so rewarding.

A few things have happened since the last time I wrote my column. 2020 has been challenging for everyone in more ways than one. Many people have lost loved ones, people have lost jobs, the absence of family connection is weighing on everyone, especially during the holiday season. I sympathize with everyone and am sending my positive, healing vibes for all.

These past few months have been a bit interesting, to say the least. My youngest child, my daughter, has been identified in school as someone who may have dyslexia. I am not a stranger to school assessments, nor am I unaware of what it is like to have a child with a disability or learning difficulties.

I am aware of the ins and out of the school bureaucracy and all the steps we must follow as parents to be able to achieve an

IEP for our child, the never-ending forms to be signed so that our children can be assisted in school. This year it has been a bit more tedious due to COVID. Nevertheless, we have started the ball rolling and she will be ok, she is in the right family, that's for sure.

To add a bit of whirlwind to our already interesting year, my hardworking husband suffered an accident at work, which resulted in a concussion. Let me give you a bit of insight on the type of individual my husband is: he is the most hardworking individual that I know. My hubby never misses a day of work, he is the type of man that refuses to believe he is sick and needs rest. He will drink water and get better faster than anyone I know. He does not like going to the doctor's office and amazingly has not gotten ill enough to get to the doctor often (Note: don't be like my husband, go get a yearly check up, make sure you are healthy and in working order).



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Well, my husband got hit in the head and literally shook it off. He had a bump on his head which he nonchalantly mentioned one day before dinner. I was a bit concerned but because he "seemed" fine, I put that concern in my back pocket.

The next day he went back to work, that evening he mentioned he had a headache, all the bells and whistles went off in my mind...he never has a headache! I told him to see the doctor sooner than later to be sure he was ok, and he reluctantly made an appointment.

By the time he made it to the doctor's office, I had to drive him there because he had a sensitivity to light. Needless to say, they found he had a minor concussion and needed to take the next 8-14 days off of work. Well, that was a big surprise

to him. For the first time he had to take time off because of an injury. It's been just over 14 days and he is still home, he's followed up with our practitioner who has said he can't go back until at least January, if not longer.

Why do I tell you these two stories? I want you to be aware, we all have that little voice we hear or that "gut feeling" that alerts us when something isn't quite right. I heard that little voice on both these occasions. I had mentioned in the past to the principal at my daughter's school that I felt something was not quite right with the way my daughter did things, and with my husband I knew he was not ok when he mentioned a headache.

But, I don't want to leave you all feeling any sort of despair. I want you to know

that I am forever an optimist, I always look for the bright side in every situation, it's just my nature. So, what's the bright side of dyslexia? Her two oldest brothers have Mild Intellectual Disability, she is in the right place, I know that my baby girl will be supported and understood in our family because we are no strangers to challenges but we get through them with lots of love and endless laughs.

As for the bright side of a concussion? You may remember I mentioned in my first article that my husband worked tirelessly when COVID took over and everything shut down except my husband's work? Well, this is a forced break! I am thankful I get to spend every day with the love of my life, my best friend, and for that I am very grateful!

Scholarship Fund Open to Simcoe County Youth

—submitted

The Glen Newby Scholarship Fund, a collaboration between New Path Foundation and New Path Youth & Family Services, is accepting applications from Simcoe County youth who are entering into or continuing in post-secondary studies and/or apprenticeship programs this year. This scholarship was created to support the legacy and commitment of Glen Newby's work in child and youth mental health.

"This scholarship fund provides additional opportunities for youth in our communities to succeed in their post-secondary or apprenticeship studies," says James Thomson, President and CEO of New Path Foundation. "This is our commitment to continue to build on the legacy and work of Glen Newby's work in supporting child and youth mental health."

Scholarship applications open on January 25th, 2021 and are available to any young person up to the age of 24 years residing in Simcoe County, entering

into or continuing in post-secondary studies and/or apprenticeship programs. There are 3 scholarships available, one award of \$2,500 and two awards of \$1,250 each. More information and the application form are available at: www.newpathfoundation.org/scholarship

"This is a wonderful opportunity for youth in our community to get some financial support for their studies," says, Elizabeth McKeeman, CEO of New Path Youth & Family Services. "Providing support to young people in our community is vital to helping them succeed. It is our hope that this scholarship fund will help them as they transition into post-secondary."

About New Path Youth & Family Services of Simcoe County

New Path Youth & Family Services of Simcoe County is a registered not for profit charitable organization. We are an accredited children's mental health agency providing a range of innovative and

timely services for children, youth and their families. We are the Lead Agency in Simcoe County working to plan for and integrate child and youth mental health services across Simcoe County.

New Path offers a range of fully-funded child and youth mental health services across Simcoe County in Alliston, Barrie, Bradford, Cookstown, Collingwood, Midland and Orillia. In order to access services, families can call 705-725-7656 to arrange an appointment. To learn more about New Path Youth and Family Services, to donate, or get involved please visit www.newpath.ca, follow us on social media Facebook: *New Path Youth & Family Services* Twitter: *@NewPathYFS* or sign up for our quarterly *TrailSigns Newsletter*

Cutline: Pictured left to right are Elizabeth McKeeman, CEO of New Path Youth & Family Services and James Thomson, President and CEO of New Path Foundation pictured together at the Barrie Common Roof on Ferris Lane. This is one of 3 Common Roof locations which act as a social service hub addressing a range of social and mental health needs for children, youth and their families in Simcoe County.

Behind the Mask

by Natasha Claire

Part 1

"Is that all you got?!" I shouted, fighting to make myself heard over the howling wind and pouring rain. He turned to face me, eyes lighting up as lightning struck a car down the street. I could tell he was smirking behind the mask covering his mouth and nose.

"You're persistent, I'll give you that!" He yelled back, running a hand through his soaked hair. I pulled the last knife from my waistband and adjusted it in my hand. His eyes drifted to the weapon, and black clouds started to pool around his body.

We paced around the roof of the building for a few moments, neither of us giving into the urge to fight, until a bolt of lightning lit up the sky, and I seized the opportunity to throw the knife. But I had miscalculated his position, and the blade only came close enough to skim his arm, leaving a thin cut along his bicep. His white sleeve started to fade into a shade of crimson red, and I felt a small twinge of guilt for ruining such a nice shirt.

"You know, this is my favourite shirt," he growled, and I could tell he was frowning under his mask.

"Then maybe you shouldn't wear it to a fight," I retorted, rolling my eyes. He huffed, extending his arms towards me. The cloud of black flew at me as if it were sentient, but I had fought this guy long enough to know that he was the brains behind it.

I jumped out of reach of the cloud, throwing my own piece of magic back at him: a small shard of glass. I hit the ground and rolled to my feet. My opponent had his hand clenched around the glass, which had pierced the fabric of his vest just

under his collarbone. I adjusted my mask, since it had gotten loose and risked exposing my face.

"You gonna be okay there, Nightshade?" I said in a mocking voice, placing my hands on my hips. I'd fought dozens of villains over the years since I'd started my career as a hero (and yes, I get paid to do this), but this villain was different. He always popped up in the strangest places, like he knew where I was going to be. His name was sort of odd too, but only if you hadn't experienced his magic. He went by the name Nightshade, like the toxic plants with the same name, because the cloud-like substance that emitted from his body had the same effect on the human body as those alkaloids do.

"No thanks to you," he grumbled, pulling out the shard of glass and tossing it on the ground. It shattered, the noise blending into that of the pouring rain.

I wiped away the wet hair that had gotten stuck to my face, blinking to keep water out of my eyes. The storm was getting worse, and the lightning was striking more frequently.



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"You thinking what I'm thinking?" Nightshade yelled over the rain. His hand was pressed over the injury on his chest, but blood was already seeping out between his fingers.

"How about we wrap this up?" I called, placing my hands on my hips. Thunder echoed down the streets as the rain pounded against my back.

"You know, you're quite an oddball," he laughed, the black clouds slowly receding until they had evaporated into thin air. "No hero I've ever met would just let the villain go so easily."

"I'm not letting you go, idiot, I'm just not in the mood for getting struck by lightning," I huffed, pulling my hood over my head.

"All right. Do you have another time we could reschedule? Maybe tomorrow at three pm?" He joked, walking over to the edge of the building.

"Ha ha, very funny," I said, shoving my hands in the pockets of my soaked sweater.

"Guess I'll see you around then," Nightshade waved before leaning back and disappearing over the edge of the building. When we had first met and he had done that, I was scared out of my mind, but now it seemed he was just doing it to have a 'cool exit'. I shook my head, heading over to the door that led inside the building.

"If only I could fly," I muttered to myself, looking down the long, long... long flight of stairs before me.

Stay Tuned for Part 2 in our April/May issue!

Greetings from North of (Highway) Nine

by Joan Mizzi-Fry

A pandemic postcard on lessons learned while coping with COVID-19

By now, you've been bombarded by social media messages and photos of how others are coping during the stay-at-home orders. Bread making runs rampant as a badge of honour, even for the 'carbs-will-never-pass-these-lips' crowd. Dogs are hiding to avoid yet another walk and many of us are still wearing the same stretchy pants from New Years Eve...and so on. So, we haven't taken up the bread making mantra, but we city folk transplants began adjusting to physical distancing long before the pandemic.

Since my husband Ron and I bought our property in Floral Park from my father-in-law's estate in 2004, it's been our dream to live

here. So, in May of 2014, we, along with our two dogs, Emmy and Oscar, moved up to this happy hamlet wedged in between Washago and Casino Rama. On paper, we were living the dream. New home, great neighbours and a front row seat to lakeside life. Please don't get me wrong; I love our community and entertaining our family and friends in the summer. Yes, it was and still is great, however, things I took for granted in the city made it hard to adjust to rural life.

First of all, high speed Internet was still threading its way into our community, a tough transition given I was still doing contract work with several city-based clients. Then, there was the distance to go shopping, to restaurants and well, more shopping. Back then, our town of Washago offered the need-to-haves such as Home Hardware, Timbr Mart, Canoe for groceries, R Cottage restaurant, and a variety store. There was the task of finding a hair-dresser, veterinarian, dog groomer, dry cleaners etc...which all seemed to find us by way of helpful neighbours passing along recommendations.

In terms of travel time, we are a 20-minute drive from the city of Orillia, the summer home of humourist Stephen Leacock, and music icon Gordon Lightfoot to name a few. Neither of whom still live here. Leacock passed away in 1944 and Lightfoot now calls the Bridlepath, a wealthy Toronto enclave, his home. But I digress...

When we lived in Oakville, if I forgot an ingredient I could just hop over to my local Longo's store within minutes. However, here in God's Country (what I affectionately call where we live) it now takes me

almost half a day to buy groceries, dog food and whatever else I might need for the week. I've learned to plan visits long in advance and to prepare a strategic list of items and errands that Churchill would envy.

Before the pandemic, we would head down to Toronto to visit family and friends as often as possible. I had missed the white knuckle driving that commences somewhere south of highway 9 or near Wonderland and the toxic fumes of too many people in a small space. Then the lockdown happened, and we were encouraged (forced) not to travel or interact too closely with others. It was like an invisible metal fence dropped down on our driveway.

As time passed, we learned to cope with the rules by wearing masks, getting groceries, physical distancing and socializing from afar. It meant we went walking with our dogs more often and chatted with neighbours-at a distance of course- and found a deep camaraderie began to bloom as we tried to keep each other's spirits up.

More blessings came in the form of my husband teaching online since last fall which meant not driving to Brampton three days a week. I began using Skype for everything from community meetings (we're challenging a new quarry proposed for our area-more on that another time), visits with family/friends, and fitness classes. I've even had doctor's appointments via the internet. This past Christmas, Ron dusted off his Santa suit - a tradition at our annual family Christmas party-and visited neighbours. We were blown away by the response of both the young and not-so-young! The adults were more thrilled than the kids.

So now we have embraced this new source of communications as well as the closer bonds we've developed at home and with our community. Still missing our family and friends and can't wait to have real versus virtual hugs. However, we're pleased and surprised by the new closer ties we've developed, thanks to



technology and the human spirit.

Hoping you've found your own way to cope with COVID-19. In the meantime, stay safe, warm and hug your dog...if they'll come out from under the bed.

Joan Mizzi-Fry is a Toronto transplant, married, dog mom of two who now lives in the pleasant and picturesque community of Floral Park, located between Washago and Casino Rama.




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photo by Deb Halbot



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Millennial Perspectives

by Laura Proctor

Have you ever noticed the circumstances around moments in your day, week, month, or year when you felt content? Sometimes when I'm feeling very relaxed and happy, I take note of the fact that nothing in my life has changed, but my outlook has. When I'm spending too much time worrying about the future or the past, things that I have no or almost no control over, I'm less content with the present. When my mind turns to more of a go-with-the-flow attitude and when I'm more mindful of appreciating and taking in the present moment, I feel happier. I was once told that managing thoughts about the future can be like looking forward while walking. If you look too far down the road you could trip. If you look close to you, down at your feet (metaphorically, at only the present moment), you'll run in to something. It's best to look just a few feet ahead.

There's something to be said for lowering your expectations as well. Not in the sense of hampering your own ambitions and goals, but feeling grateful for sun on your face, kind neighbours, food in your fridge, meeting a cute dog. Realizing that some goals take

time and that everything you want doesn't have to happen at once can help. Many expectations are put on us by ourselves, so we have the power to adjust what isn't serving us and is just causing us anxiety.

How do we know when our thoughts aren't serving us? When we feel anxious, over-tired, depressed, stressed out, or unhappy a lot of the time. Negative and anxious thinking can exhaust your body. The impact that your mental state can have on your body is amazing. And vice versa; moving your body can have a huge improvement on your mental state. Throughout this pandemic I have taken a walk (with a podcast playing in my ear) almost every day, and done yoga for free on YouTube four to six days a week.

I don't want to know how stressed I could have been without these little escapes. Each walk brings me awe and gratitude as I'm greeted with stunning late afternoon light, families enjoying each other's company, people helping each other, friendly neighbourhood cats, intricate ice patterns on the ground. It's good to look around you, take in and let out a deep breath,

and just think "Oh, this is nice". If mindfulness is new to you, that's all it really has to be. Oh, this is nice.

Sometimes it feels like everything is overwhelming, and then the next day with no change in circumstance, it feels like you can handle it. Whether it's your circumstances or your mind talking, when you feel overwhelmed it's time for a break. We aren't as productive when we're stressed out; we make more mistakes, and we work slower. Sometimes a break can be a smart time investment that pays off with a calmer mind (most importantly), and more productivity when it's needed.

Next time it feels like nothing is right and everything in your life needs to change or align, in order for you to be happy, remember that this might not be coming from an outside source. Sometimes it comes from how you are viewing your own circumstances.

These next couple or few months may be tough. There is reason to be hopeful; a vaccine is here, and it's being distributed, just like we'd hoped. Hang on to this hope and look just a few feet ahead of you.

Council Meeting Schedule

Regularly scheduled electronic Meetings of Council/Committee for the months of February, 2021 and March, 2021 will take place on the following dates:

Council Meetings:

- Wednesday, February 10th – 10:00 a.m. Public Session
- Wednesday, February 24th – 10:00 a.m. Public Session
- Wednesday, March 10th – 10:00 a.m. Public Session
- Wednesday, March 24th – 10:00 a.m. Public Session

Development Services Committee Meetings:

- Development Services Committee - Wednesday, February 3rd - 5:30 p.m.
- Development Services Committee – Wednesday, March 3rd – 5:30 p.m.

All meeting times are subject to change and Special Meetings of Council may also be called on an as needed basis. For a complete schedule of 2021/2022 Council meetings, please visit the Council Portal available through our website.

Please note: During the COVID-19 public health crisis, members of the public are welcome to view Special Council and Development Services Meetings via [livestream](#) on the Township's YouTube channel.

Public Participation in Electronic Meetings

The Township of Oro-Medonte has amended its Procedural By-law to allow for electronic participation at Council meetings during a declared emergency. Protocols have been established to advise how to participate in the public portions of these meetings. Please visit oro-medonte.ca/Pages/Public-Participation.aspx for more information, including how to participate in Open Forum or request a deputation/presentation.

Live Streaming

Township of Oro-Medonte Council meetings are lived streamed. To view meetings live, visit oro-medonte.ca and click on "Council Portal." Please subscribe to our YouTube channel; Township of Oro-Medonte.

Parking Reminder

The Municipal Law Enforcement Division reminds all residents that between of October 15th and April 30th inclusive, no person shall park or leave a vehicle unattended in a manner that interferes with the operation of winter road maintenance. Any vehicle found to have interfered with winter road maintenance may be issued a parking infraction. Your cooperation in helping to ensure our roads are properly maintained is greatly appreciated.

Spring Road Sweeping



Following winter operations, road sweeping is scheduled to start approximately April 1st and will take roughly 6-8 weeks to complete. Residents are reminded that Township staff will sweep the roadway only. However, residents are encouraged to rake out any sand onto the road prior to commencement of sweeping operations. To receive updates regarding completion of zones and additional information, please follow the Township of Oro-Medonte on Facebook and Twitter.

2021 Property Tax and Water Bill Due Dates

Property Taxes

Property taxes are calculated annually by applying Council's approved tax rates to property assessment values as provided by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). Tax rates include Township, County, and education taxes. Payment for property taxes is due in four installments on the **last business day** of February, April, July and September respectively. To avoid interest charges, payment of the first Property Tax installment for 2021 must be made no later than February, Friday 26, 2020.

Water Bills

Water usage is billed quarterly, with payment due dates falling on the last business day of February, May, August, and November. The fourth quarterly payment for 2020 usage must be made no later than **Friday, February 26th**, and the first quarterly payment for 2021 usage must be made no later than **Friday, May 28th**.

In order to assist with keeping track of the Township's water billing schedule, please see below:

Water Billing Schedule		
Usage Period	Bills Mailed	Payment Due Last Business Day of:
January – March	April	May
April – June	July	August
July – September	October	November
October – December	January	February

Pre-Authorized Payment Program (PAPP)

Residents can enroll in pre-authorized payment programs to pay their property taxes and/or water bills. This voluntary program authorizes your financial institution to automatically withdraw payments from your bank account and forward payment to the Township. For more please visit oro-medonte.ca or contact the Finance Department.

Virtual Snowman Building Competition



With the beauty and quiet of winter upon us, comes opportunity to get outside and have fun in the snow, right in our own front, back, or side yards.

Understanding challenges associated with not being able to participate in usual activities due to COVID-19, from **January 15th to February 28th**, the Township is encouraging the Oro-Medonte community to play in the snow, take in some fresh, crisp, air, and add a little fun to homes and neighbourhoods by participating in a friendly community voting and prize-based snowman building competition. 1st, 2nd, 3rd prize winners from each category will be given a gift certificate for an Oro-Medonte business of their choice.

For details, please see

[#OroMedonteSnowman Contest | Facebook](#)

Milestone Celebration Certificates

If you or a loved one is celebrating a milestone birthday or anniversary, Mayor Hughes and Members of Council are pleased to offer congratulatory certificates to help commemorate these special occasions. Please visit oro-medonte.ca/council-committees/council/milestone-certificate-request to submit your request to have a certificate presented by the Mayor and/or a Member of Council in recognition of a significant milestone celebration. Contact the Township Administration Centre for more information.



COVID-19 Impacts to the Township

The Township of Oro-Medonte continues to respond to the evolving COVID-19 public health crisis.


Due to the second declared Provincial Emergency, and Stay-at-Home Order, at this time, the Township has suspended in-person customer service by appointment, and all Township facilities are closed to the public.

Residents are encouraged to utilize electronic means for Township related business - **staff continue to be available to provide customer service by phone or e-mail.**


There are a number of temporary adjustments that impact the Township's services and programs. For the most up-to-date information, please follow the Township's social channels and dedicated COVID-19 web page by visiting oro-medonte.ca/Pages/Covid-19-Information.aspx.

As a reminder, please continue to follow the advice and direction from public health experts. To stay informed about information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, please visit simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/COVID-19


STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19:




Stay home and self-isolate for 14 days after your last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19.



Only leave the house to get tested. It is recommended you seek testing 5-7 days from your last exposure to the case. For testing centre locations visit our website.



Monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19.



If you do get tested you must still self-isolate while you wait for your results. **Because you were a close contact of a positive case, even if your test result is negative you must continue to self-isolate for the full 14 days.**

www.smdhu.org/COVID

Please note: The COVID-19 public health crisis is a fluid situation and information is subject to change.

Township of Oro-Medonte News

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Upcoming Office Closures



The Township Administration Centre will be closed on **Monday, February 15th for Family Day** with regular business hours resuming at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 16th. In recognition of Good Friday and Easter Monday, the Township Administration Centre will close on **Friday, April 2nd and Monday, April 5th**. Regular business hours will resume at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 6th.

Support for the Business Community During COVID-19

Oro-Medonte Economic Development staff continues to work with our partners including the County of Simcoe and regional partners to provide business resources during COVID-19. For a list of available resources and government support, please visit oro-medonte.ca/OroMedonteStrong

Now more than ever, we need to support our local businesses. Visit the website to find a list of businesses that are operating and providing services. As well, you will find success stories about businesses that have pivoted their operations during COVID-19. We encourage the community to come together and share #OroMedonteStrong stories.



Please Support Local Business



Suggested ways of how you can help local businesses and still follow guidelines for physical distancing:

- When possible, buy local
- Look for local farm gate sales, buy from local producers
- Purchase from local businesses online
- Order local meals for curbside takeout or delivery
- Write positive reviews of businesses you have visited
- Share messages about local businesses through social media
- Share the businesses social posts through your social media channels
- Purchase gift certificates now that you can use later

Timely Topic

by Oro-Medonte Mayor and Council

Supporting Ontario's Stay Home, Stay Safe, and Save Lives Campaign

As COVID-19 case counts continue to rise, it is more critical than ever that Ontarians stay home with exceptions for essential purposes (i.e. trips to the grocery store/accessing food, pharmacy, accessing health care services, for exercise, or for essential work.)

Re-emphasising the importance of staying home, and to help break the tragic trend of COVID-19 transmission in Ontario communities, hospitals, and long-term care homes, on Friday, January 22, the Province of Ontario launched a social media campaign using #StayHomeON. To support Ontario's health care system, health care workers, and essential workers, the Province requested assistance from all Ontario municipalities to share the stay home, stay safe and save lives campaign; the Township of Oro-Medonte will continue to support Provincial efforts. #StayHomeON is a reminder that we all have a responsibility to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Jeff Hopper, a well know Bell Media iHeartRadio Co-Host with Pure County 94 shared his personal story of COVID-19 during an interview with CTV Ottawa in December, 2020. To view his story, please see bit.ly/3qKwuPD and through #StayHomeON bit.ly/3c4mDQz.

The health and safety of our residents and staff remain a top priority. Township decisions continue to be guided by, and made based on information provided by public health agencies including: the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, the Ontario Ministry of Health, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and healthcare experts. Please refer to the Township's dedicated webpage for updates and information regarding COVID-19 by visiting oro-medonte.ca/community/covid-19-information.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as the Township continues to adjust business operations due to the public health crisis.

Please stay home, stay safe, and take care of yourself and those around you by following the advice and recommendations of healthcare experts.



ABOUT CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

WHAT IT IS

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some can infect animals, and some can infect humans. COVID-19 is a new disease caused by the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019. COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March 2020.

Those who are infected with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms. **Symptoms of COVID-19** are often similar to other illnesses.

SPREAD

Coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets when you cough or sneeze
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands

These viruses are not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water.

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS

If you have **symptoms** of COVID-19:

- stay home (**isolate**) to avoid spreading it to others
 - if you live with others, stay in a separate room or keep a 2-metre distance
- call ahead before you visit a health care professional or call your **local public health authority**
 - tell them your symptoms and follow their instructions
- if you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and tell them your symptoms

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of COVID-19 can:

- take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus
- be very mild or more serious
- vary from person to person

PREVENTION

The best way to prevent the spread of infections is to:

- practice **physical distancing** at all times
- stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others
- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are sick
- when coughing or sneezing:
 - cover your mouth and nose with your arm or tissues to reduce the spread of germs
 - immediately dispose of any tissues you have used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as toys, electronic devices and doorknobs
- wear a **non-medical mask or face covering** (i.e. **constructed** to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops) to protect the people and surfaces around you

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CORONAVIRUS:

☎ 1-833-784-4397

@ [canada.ca/coronavirus](https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus)



photo by Deb Halbot

Horseshoe Valley Kaleidoscope by Valerie Thornton

Life in this challenging pandemic era continues, but many good things are still happening to keep us in good spirits. One is the snowman building event in our Township. It is so

lovely to see all the cheery snow people appear and the first two I have seen are particularly delightful: Hayley Duncan showed her daughter Emma's great snow family of four – brilliant, what an absolutely super job Emma – and Angie Jarvis showed the first family creation: a little snowman called “Tiny” surrounded by two little girls with beautiful smiles...just so lovely, made my day! Posting these on Facebook means that so many of us can see them, especially if you are housebound and cannot wander around the community to see them. I should also add the wonderful photographs being shared of beautiful winter scenes. Thank you to all those who are making Oro-Medonte a cheerful place to be. You are doing a super job.

As we enter into our second year of living with COVID-19 we are hopeful, now that there are vaccines available (even though there are not enough to go around), that things will gradually improve. This pandemic has caused a serious problem in so many areas of our society, including our health system with some people with serious illnesses/diseases being neglected and their surgeries postponed, conditions which could have been dealt with if caught early become serious and life threatening as people avoided seeking help when our pandemic-focused health system became less available and walk in clinics closed, visits

to Emergency were discouraged and doctor's appointments became over the telephone. We only hear about COVID-19 deaths but not of those from cancer, opioids overdose and other serious illnesses.

I feel that we have been relatively fortunate to be living where people can still get out in the fresh air and some activities are still available: cross country skiing, snowshoeing, walking and some skating. It is very sad that downhill skiing had to close but I can understand it as so many people would be coming from the “hot” areas.

Some bridge/book clubs and other groups are still going with Zoom meetings or internet play. Zoom has been great for so many people and my family had several gatherings over the holiday season including celebrating birthdays. For our usual Christmas Eve gathering our son-in-law Rob made special appetizers and treats, delivering them to each group (six of us) so that the following day we could still gather with our meal (it is tradition that he always cooks this meal on the 24th). We even had a quiz game.

Another highlight for me was the delivery of a special “Isolation Advent Christmas Package” dropped off by our granddaughter Charley and her mum on December 1st, which had a gift to open every day. They did this for four other family members, and they tell me that they had so much fun doing it. We all certainly enjoyed it. I felt like a kid again and the first package contained two excellent masks. Also included in each package were small 2 x 2 canvases which we all had to paint and submit for judging.

So, a very different Christmas season for many of us, but still joy and happiness around. We had lost a dear cousin (in England) to COVID-19 in November, so were not in any celebratory mood and grateful for these family gatherings which were precious.

Regarding the Zone 1 water integration they

are still waiting for incorporation which is taking so much longer than anticipated (another culprit of the pandemic). Thankfully when a new lockdown was coming in November the matter was postponed until April so the Township had to comply; to me common sense to do it in the spring when the weather was better, and people wouldn't be confined to their homes as much and hopefully more people would be vaccinated and the virus under more control.

Sugarbush had a Developers Community Information Session regarding Line 6 North and Horseshoe Valley Road intersection improvements, on January 20 via Zoom. In my opinion it was a discouraging session with residents feeling that a decision had already been made (I had watched a section of it which led me to believe that it was not going to be an inspiring, informative event).

I will listen to the Sugarbush presentation but somehow do not expect much from it. There appear to be two choices re the proposed entrances into Sugarbush and from what I can see I feel both should be utilized as safety is a prime concern, and the last thing that Line 6 needs is extra traffic. Having two entrances would be excellent and especially safe in the winter as, if road conditions are poor and it is difficult to turn off at Line 6 in icy conditions you then have a choice and avoid causing an accident. This is what happens to me in winter conditions; I live on Birch Grove in the Valley and if for some reason I come down the hill and conditions are bad and I cannot turn into the Resort I can keep going and turn off onto Country Club to safely reach my home.

This is my hibernation month and, amazingly I am thoroughly enjoying it. Keeping away from too much news on the television and Facebook is actually uplifting and good for the soul. Now a new administration is in south of the border, I hope that Canadians will focus on what is happening here in our own country.

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Huronia Rose Society Sale

—submitted

The Huronia Rose Society Annual Rose Sale is underway for 2021!

We are excited to present the roses we have for sale in 2021. Gardening is the perfect activity during these days of keeping safe, keeping our distance and keeping well.

Pricing:

Roses are \$25 each or 3/\$65 (must purchase 3 roses for bundle-pricing)

Austin Roses are \$30 each

Taxes included

Pre book today and payment will be received on pick up day in May.

Full details on pick up to follow in the spring.

Contact Michelle Lynch :

lynchfam@sympatico.ca or Call: 705-325-4143. For more information and to see pictures of all the rose varieties we have, visit our website at <https://huroniarose.wordpress.com/>.

photos from The Huronia Rose Society website



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photo by Deb Halbot

Gardening with Gail (and Bentley) by Gail McIlroy

February still being in the dead of winter, lawns and earth still covered with a blanket of snow...still a great time to rev up our enthusiasm and plan and indoor plant. The really ambitious gardeners will have already gained a head start. Frost in this part of Ontario is usually around until the first or second week in May.

There is a great guide for seed planting at www.johnnyseeds.com. As we get closer to March, the daylight becomes not only stronger, but the days of brightness are longer. April is a great time to use box gardens, covered with glass or plastics. Some-

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times even dollar store clear umbrellas work, depending on the temperatures.

Seedlings need a lot of light to grow sturdy healthy flowers. Even a south-west window will not produce enough light this time of year. Sterilized soil is good because the seedlings are so delicate. Monitoring how much water to give is absolutely necessary. Personally, I had to learn this from trial and error, always concerned the seedlings weren't getting enough water. No room for error, seedlings can be unforgiving.

Creating a mini greenhouse is an excellent way to start from seed indoors in the winter.

1. Cover your seeds until they start to germinate
2. Water from the bottom up through drainage holes
3. Water should be added slowly for 6 to 8 minutes
4. Use your finger to make sure the water has got to the top of the container
5. Check soil moisture once a day

Indoor seeds are not happy with cold air, the plant will be "stressed" if exposed to drafts or cold air. When stressed the plant will become more susceptible to disease. Usually seed started plants will be able to go outside four to six weeks after they have been started and provided the outside temperature is warm enough. This process is called "hardening off". Nurseries harden off their plants before the public can purchase. I like to "harden off" using my garage. Generally, the process means starting with one hour outside, then back inside, second day add an hour; complete this process by adding an hour every day for six to



ten days. Gradually your young plants will be accustomed to all of the elements of outdoor living. This is definitely time consuming, so if you are new to gardening you may want to start with seeds that can go outdoors right away, after May 24.

Another tip, for seeds to germinate successfully they need to be kept warm, i.e. from 65 to 75 degrees. Some people use seed warming mats and place these mats directly under the seed container.

Remember to label your trays, although you think you will remember. I remember being in a terrible mess years ago by not labeling; you can imagine!

Happy planning/planting! Gardening is such a great hobby with so many benefits, not to mention a great resource during these months with COVID-19. Stay safe everyone, be creative, and enjoy every day. —Bentley and Gail



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Ask Risha

by Risha Yorke

As a Business and Success coach, I answer questions about business foundations, team building, or your own path to success. Send your questions in to risha@yorkemotivational.com.

How do I soar when I'm grounded?

This question is one I have been marinating for a few months. This question is mine.

We've all had to adapt to this past year. I'm not going to complain or moan about all the plans that have changed, events that have been cancelled, or lives that have been altered. Sacrifices have been made for the greater good, and I'll continue to make them until the all-clear is sounded.

Here's the challenge that I've been trying to overcome. It's my job to help people find their path to success. I love my job. In doing this, we discover what makes them tick, what fills their cup, we uncover their passions, and I take them through the steps and actions that will help them feel accomplished and focused. **The challenge is not only in guiding my clients, but walking my talk.**

I'm an extrovert. We extroverts are not ok. I'm a player, not a bystander. I'm a hugger, not a wallflower. I am impatient. Maybe you can relate? I've always lived by Benjamin Franklin's famous quote, "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today." Well...I can't do things today. So many of the things that alleviate my stress and fulfill my ambitions are currently off limits. Being completely transparent, it feels like a loss of momentum, and I know my small business owner friends agree. So, like everyone else, I'm in discovery mode. For me and my clients I ask, "How do I soar when I'm grounded?"

Here is what I've come up with:

Quiet time and reflection allows us to prioritize.

Slowing things down gives us the opportunity to decide if we are focusing on the right things for us. We all get caught up in the fray. We move headlong through our days without the time to rethink our priorities. This is the perfect chance to take stock, take a breath and make sure we are spending our energies in the right places.

Things are not cancelled, they are postponed.

In some cases, this might be a blessing in disguise. A lot of the time, as a small business owner, I'm sprinting to catch up to the opportunities. We have been given the time to plan ahead, get organized and ready for what is coming, what our goals are, and like a good stage manager, we will have everything we need in our kit when the show starts.

Our future is bright, and we have been gifted the time to focus on the details. I'm big into meditation and visualization. It helps me figure out what I really want in this life and what is most important to me. The more detailed these visualizations are, the more real they feel. The more real they feel, the more likely they will come to life. This pandemic slow down allows us the time to really visualize what we want to come to us.


We can be our best selves in this situation.

Whether that means taking it day by day, focusing on family, self-care, taking some courses, supporting others, solidifying a 5-year plan, or learning more about ourselves. This isn't a competition. Be kind to yourself.


Here is what I figured out. Even a plane has to land sometimes. I am on the runway. I am ready to soar. When the way is clear, I am ready for take-off. I'll sit through the safety protocols and emergency exits speech a few more times, but I will see the sky and clouds eventually.



photo by Deb Halbot



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Georgian takes the lead in advanced technologies thanks to partnership with global innovator Magna International Inc. —submitted

Magna – a Canadian mobility tech company with comprehensive global presence – will make a \$1 million investment in Georgian College to help bridge the skills gap, drive change in the field of mechatronics, and prepare students for industry 4.0 opportunities. The five-year, multi-faceted agreement will lead to the creation of a new, state-of-the-art facility and new scholarship opportunities for both future and current Georgian students. The partnership also includes exploration of innovative research and development opportunities, programming around co-op and post-graduate employment, and exciting new collaborations in the area of corporate training and recruitment.

A major part of the investment will be the new Magna Mechatronics Lab. When complete, this innovative space will be home to students in a variety of programs, particularly those in the new Electromechanical Engineering Technology – Mechatronics three-year advanced diploma program, starting Sept. 2021. The space will also naturally extend into joint research projects and Magna employees will benefit from new customized on-demand training. Mechatronics is the interdisciplinary study of electrical, mechanical and computing systems and there is growing demand and a scarcity of talent with this valuable knowledge and skillset. Georgian graduates will be job ready for innovative

employers like Magna.

"We are extremely excited to partner with Magna, an employer of choice right here in Central Ontario," said MaryLynn West-Moynes, President and CEO, Georgian College. "This investment underscores Magna's commitment to help develop future-ready graduates, their own workforce as well as support research collaborations to deliver innovative solutions for the benefit of the advanced manufacturing sector. Ensuring Georgian has state-of-the-art equipment and exceptional learning spaces will prepare our students to lead when they graduate into this dynamic, evolving global industry."

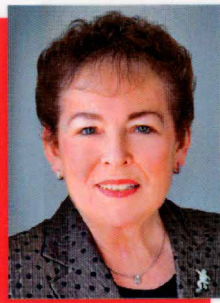
And while the new space will be a valuable addition to the Barrie Campus, both Georgian and Magna are equally excited about other holistic initiatives in the partnership to support regional growth. Magna is focused on a collaboration that will create, sustain and ensure viability in this rapidly changing environment. Georgian's growing eminence

as Central Ontario's hub for innovation, collaboration and commercialization along with its program diversity, current strength and emerging programmatic focus, aligns with Magna's key goals.

"The way we can stay ahead in a competitive and constantly changing world is to plan and invest in the future," said Magna Chief Human Resources Officer Aaron McCarthy. "At Magna we're committed to providing students and working people with opportunities to further their education, gain new skills, and bring out the best in themselves. This is a core part of the Magna culture and we're grateful for the opportunity to partner with Georgian College."

Through the new partnership, Georgian and Magna are united in a shared commitment to support the next generation of highly skilled workers and helping create new economic growth in Barrie, Simcoe County and beyond.





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Floral Design with a Twist

by Hazel Drury, Oro-Medonte Horticultural Society

COVID-19 has driven me in new directions. How about you? I have shopped in fewer stores, yet my accents inside are more entertaining. Here are some ideas I have used in bouquets and some I am contemplating for 2021.

As I walked outside in 2020, my eyes were looking at nature differently. I saw new decorating ideas. Often, I mixed twigs, small curved branches, bark, moss etc. with my cut flowers such as gladiolas, sunflowers, marigolds and zinnias. An all-green arrangement would have some of the following: garlic stems with scraps, tall grasses, crinkly kale, dill, green wheat stems and tulip, peony or poppy stems with seedpods.

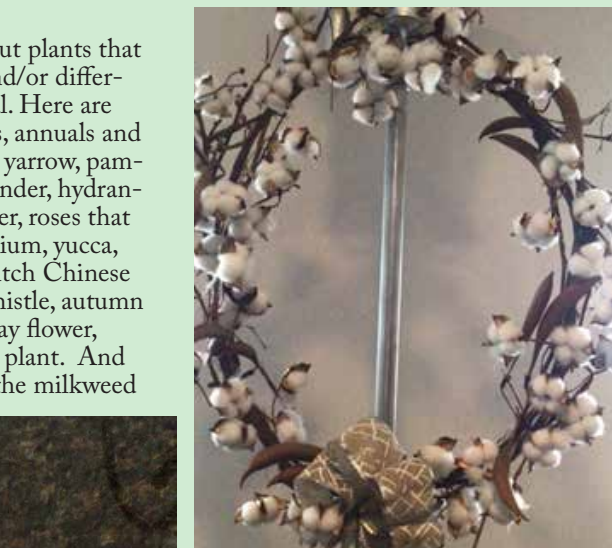
A helpful website that I have followed is Floral Designer *Francoise Weeks*. Francoise caught my attention with her

unusual designs. Her arrangements used the basic elements of art: colour, line, shape and texture. She was offering courses in Canada, however, now they are online.

Garden plants that produce pods add delight to arrangements. Plants that produce true pods are members of the legume family such as peas, beans, lupine and wisteria to name a few. Another pod-bearing plant I used the pods from is the trumpet vine. The pods are usually six inches long and curved. They dry best left on the plant until completely dry.

I added these to a grapevine wreath that I had wrapped in cotton strands.

Now that planning is beginning for 2021, think about plants that provide extra and/or different visual appeal. Here are some perennials, annuals and shrubs to plant: yarrow, pampas grasses, lavender, hydrangeas, straw flower, roses that provide hips, allium, yucca, pussy willow, witch Chinese lantern, globe thistle, autumn joy stonecrop, gay flower, poppies, money plant. And let's not forget the milkweed



Coldwater... A Village on the River

by Sue Piitz

Where do I begin? Things change from week to week and day to day, so whatever I write here for your information please understand that time and circumstances might change any or all information. So here we are.

The shops in the village are doing their best to conduct business but of course all of us are asked to wear masks, keep to the rule of social distancing, and use hand sanitizer where provided. With so many masks available now, there really is no excuse for anyone not wearing one when out walking near others or shopping. **Curbside pickup can be arranged** at some of the shops. But some shops are closed, things being the way they are.

If you have a friend or relative that does not have an electronic device, I sincerely hope **that you are including them in your bubble**. I honestly do not know what we would do without these devices. I hope that you are putting yours to good use and expanding your knowledge in many useful areas. For instance, gardening. You can quite literally spend hours and hours watching videos on YouTube

on gardening, knitting, quilting, history, woodwork, carving etc. etc.

If you belong to a quilting, gardening, knitting group check out the many Guilds online. I have not had enough time to see all there is to see. It has been awesome.

Now I know that many do not like digging in the dirt but there are gloves specifically made to protect your hands. Not all gardening has to be done outside. Many a person enjoys an indoor garden in containers of all sorts. As long as it has a drainage hole in it, an old margarine container can be used to grow something. Caution, make sure to put the lid under it, or an old saucer, to catch any leaks. With spring coming, seeds can be started this way not only for flowers but for veggies, from veggies and fruit seeds in your refrigerator. Peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, lemon, orange pips (these grow into amazing house plants.) Watch how-to videos on YouTube.

Don't be afraid to expand your horizons. Reach out and phone a neighbour just to say hello. We will get through this. Until next time...

Hello Warminster!

Hey! Want to build a snowman? The Township is conducting a contest which encourages you to get outside and have some fun (in your own yard). Pictures are posted and voted on in Facebook. If you do not have a Facebook account, ask a friend to take the picture and post it for you. Here are the details:

From **January 15th to February 28th**, the Township of Oro-Medonte is encouraging the Oro-Medonte community to play in the snow, take in some fresh, crisp, air, and add a little fun to homes and neighbourhoods by participating in a friendly community voting and prize-based snowman building competition.

Contest Details:

1. Build a snowman with your household members in your yard. *Please note the contest is open to residents of Oro-Medonte only.
2. Oro-Medonte business owners - consider promoting your business by building a snowman at your business location.
3. Take a picture and share your snowman on social media using the hashtag #oromedontesnowman, indicating your contest category of choice in your post.
4. Snowman submissions must be suitable for all audiences; the Township of Oro-Medonte will remove any submissions deemed to

be inappropriate at its sole discretion.

5. Snowman picture submissions are considered to be public, and will be viewed by the general public.
6. Submission of snowman pictures provides permission to the Township to use images for marketing purposes at its sole discretion.

Contest Categories:

1. Traditional "Frosty"
2. Creative - think colours, shape, size, design and style
3. Business - local businesses, please submit under this category

How to Vote:

1. 1. Category winners will be based on the highest number of Facebook likes per individual snowman submission at the closing of the competition. The closing date is weather dependent and targeted for February 28, 2021.
2. 2. Remember to like and follow your submission and share with your friends and family

Prizing:

1st, 2nd, 3rd prize winners from each category will be given a gift certificate for an Oro-Medonte business of their choice

1st prize - \$100.00 gift certificate
2nd prize - \$50.00 gift certificate
3rd prize - \$25.00 gift certificate

Closing of the contest is weather dependent so be sure to build your snowman and take pictures and post while there is still snow on the ground, and the weather is cold.

Please remember to follow all COVID-19 safety measures, have fun, and play safe while creating your snowman.

This contest isn't sponsored, endorsed, administered by, or associated with Facebook.

I know many of you are feeling the affects of the lockdown. The numbers are climbing exponentially. We have seen the devastating effects in our seniors' home residents. The government stating, they are our most vulnerable. I agree, but what about our other most vulnerable? Sending children back to school is a disaster waiting to happen. Our smallest people are very friendly, and it is hard for them to not want to play with their little friends. Our teenagers think they are invincible and gather too close and without masks. I have seen reports coming out of BC showing the effects on children that contract COVID-19. It causes severe damage to their developing lungs.

I understand the other side of the coin as well. Parents need to get back to work. How does one tell a child they have to move out of their home because they can't afford to stay? If you put your child into daycare, you can work, but at what cost? Will they truly be safe?

So many aspects of everyone's lives are affected by this virus. Yet the underlying information is the same. Social distancing. There was a study showing that for the most part, businesses are not to blame. They are following the protocols put in place. Why? Because their livelihood depends on the consumer. One of the issues seems to be community spread. Too many people have become complacent and tired of staying away from each other. So, we see gatherings at the toboggan hills and ice skating to name a couple.

I truly understand the need to be social. The need for human contact. The desperate need to give someone a hug. How do you keep your sanity? Stave off depression? Keep

the walls in your home from closing in? But how do we also come out the other end with our family, friends, and neighbours still alive? This is a tough one, but we have seen in history that we humans are resilient. We overcome the harshest, difficult, and harrowing situations and become stronger for it. So please keep up the good fight. Dig your heels in and social distance for a while longer. We will win.

Other News

After long discussions and deliberations, the Warminster Active Ladies Club has disbanded. They have been in our community for decades, helping where they could. The ladies of this club gave of their time to help deliver Christmas baskets and Easter baskets to our shut-ins. If someone passed away, a bereavement basket was delivered to help the family. In the past at the school, the ladies would make hot dogs and man the tables at their year end barbeque. They collected candy and helped the church make up candy bags for Santa to give the children after the Santa Claus parade. They sponsored at team each year in the Soccer Club.

In November, the ladies would tirelessly bake pies, cookies and treats to fundraise at the craft sale at the Legion. In years past, they used to make the annual Christmas dinner for the firefighter's banquet. In more recent years, they held an annual garage sale to fundraise to help more people in our community.

They sent out cards to those that had been ill to wish them a speedy recovery. Participated in a food drive with the fire department. Each year at Christmas and Easter they would send a donation to the Coldwater Food Bank, St. Vincent de Paul, and Orillia Food Bank. They even conducted an in-club auction to help raise funds to contribute more within our community.

Through only two fundraisers a year, as well as donations from within the community, they did their best to not only help, but to try and improve where we live. They were able to establish a small garden at the corner of Warminster Side Road and Highway 12 in memory of Patsy Robbins. Disbanding was a hard decision for the ladies, but due to COVID-19 they are not able to continue. As a community, we would like to thank them for all they have done. They did make a difference and we will miss them.

At the park, there are some volunteers trying to keep the ice rink going. I know this is not a small task, so if anyone wants to help out shovelling and watering that would be great. There is a form that needs to be completed from the Township to cover for liability. Ask around the rink or you can go to the Township website to get the form.

Let's hope by the next issue we will have better news and a more positive outlook. Til then, enjoy building your snowmen!



photo by Deb Halbot



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On March 2, 1699, French-Canadian explorer Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville arrived at a plot of ground 60 miles directly south of New Orleans, and named it “Pointe du Mardi Gras” when his men realized it was the eve of the festive holiday.

from: www.mardigrasneworleans.com/history

Edgar/Clowes Community News

by Patricia Shellswell

Although we had some heavy snowfall at the beginning of winter, January has had a number of snow-free days. My grandson who does snowplowing hasn't been called out in three weeks. The past weekend was mild enough for all the snow to come off my steel roof.

Sympathy is extended to Marg Parke and her extended family on the passing of her husband Dan. He had some health issues for a while but personally I remember him as an active woodsman. Dan enjoyed our strawberry supper at the hall.

Sympathy to Randy and Rob Partridge and family on the loss of their mother. Betty was a member of Dalston United Church and Clowes' Women's Institute. She was an active partner on their Line 3 farm. She was known for her excellent baking. She loved to try new recipes when friends came to visit.

Thank you to the individuals who made donations to the hall in memory of Dan and Betty.

Thanks to all who honoured their hall pledges in 2020, as well as others who made donations.

The majority of the work at the hall has been completed but currently construction is on hold due to COVID-19. The board

has been blessed with many supporters but sometimes it feels like we move forward then hit a bump in the road beyond our immediate control. Thanks to our contractor and the board: Wayne, Lori, Al, Lynn and yours truly, as we face each new hurdle with a positive attitude. Edgar will once again have a community-owned hall.

The current lockdown does not allow too much interaction with our neighbours, friends, and relatives, so news is limited.

Many neighbours are out walking. Due to a number of falls, I try to exercise in my home. It is a time when one could very easily become a couch potato, whether reading a book or watching TV. I try to get up and do something after 10 pages, or during a commercial. If one has lived in a place for 60 years, there is always something to do. It is a challenge to avoid walking to the fridge!

Happy new year everyone. There are better days ahead.

If you have news, call Pat at 705-739-7579.

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photo by Deb Halbot

Coping with COVID-19: Mindful Musing #2

by Dr. Gerald Levine, MD

Rising case numbers. Lock down. Hospitals filling. When do I get my vaccine?

Ten months of pandemic stress is taking its toll on all of us. The ray of light produced by the record-setting production of effective vaccines has been somewhat dimmed by the slow pace of roll out. We all need to optimize our self-care and resilience strategies until the situation improves.

Mindful practice and attitudes have been the key for my coping. The next few musings will explore in some detail how these can help us surf these severe “stress waves”.

The mindful principles or attitudes are: kindness, non-judgmental acceptance, patience, trust, beginner’s mind (curiosity), non-striving and letting go (non-clinging). Practising non-judgmental acceptance will be the focus of this musing.

We do not have to like everything, but we do need to deal with everything. It is said that suffering equals stress multiplied by resistance. In the face of challenges, lowering our resistance through mindful acceptance does reduce suffering.

When we resist reality by wishing things were different, it activates our stress reaction and does not change unpleasant circumstances. It depletes our energy and clouds our problem-solving abilities. Joy and creativity are blunted.

A common myth is that practising non-judgmental acceptance implies giving up, giving in or being passive. When we fully accept, without judgment, whatever is currently happening, we can focus our energy on managing reality. We can take calm, wise action and build resilience.

It is normal to wish for a return to our previous way of life. The key practice is to cultivate awareness of these thoughts, as well as the emotions and bodily sensations they produce. Formal mindfulness meditation practice helps our calm perspective to be in charge, not our thoughts and emotions.

Using the pandemic to cultivate mindful non-judgmental acceptance may be the silver lining that will help you navigate all of life’s stress waves.

Visit the website www.managestress.ca for more mindful information.

Dalston-Crown Hill and Forest Home United Churches

by Janet Panting

Dalston-Crown Hill - 1734 Penetanguishene Rd., Springwater (in hamlet of Dalston)

Forest Home - 165 Line 15 North, Orillia, (in hamlet of Forest Home)

During the Christmas season, our churches had to adapt to creating on-line Christmas Pageants, and re-working our White Gift Sunday. Here’s what we did:

The Christmas season at Forest Home United Church was different but still a joyful and meaningful time. The church family collected Walmart gift cards for Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions to be used to aid families that are struggling in these difficult times. The generosity of our small church is always amazing. Our Christmas Eve service was particularly special. Each family with children had a scene of the Christmas story that they videoed and Rev. Will put it all together into a wonderful telling of this special story of the birth of Jesus. All the family members were involved, including a few exceptional dogs who were dressed for their parts!

Dalston-Crown Hill held a “live” virtual Christmas Pageant, by Zoom, with families participating, in costume, to tell the story of the birth of Jesus. The pageant was narrated by Santa and Mrs. Claus, from their home at the North Pole. Some of the participants were on the screen, and others were speaking over their

phone. We’re all still learning how to place our computers, tablets etc. to capture the best video shots, so a rehearsal helped us with that aspect. Throughout Advent, we invited people to submit, either live or on a pre-recorded video, a short clip of what Christmas traditions they hold dear. Our folks received the mailing addresses for our three charities we support at Christmas, to donate monetary gifts this year.

Church services have continued over Zoom as well as limited attendance in the sanctuary. You must book your attendance and pass a COVID-19 screening to attend. With the provincial Stay at Home order, attendance will be even more limited but we will always welcome you to join us on Zoom. Please let us know if you would like to attend with a message on our website.

We are still trying to stay in touch with each other through phone calls and a church newsletter. It is a difficult time, but we are making the best of it and looking forward to better days ahead.

Forest Home and Dalston-Crown Hill churches are beginning to establish a relationship with Bunibonabee (Oxford House) Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. This was just in the beginning stages of trying to establish ways to support the people and the United Church there, when COVID-19 hit the com-

munity. In a community of 2000, they have had 250 cases of COVID-19 and 3 deaths as of mid January! The stress the whole community is living through is unimaginable and we are keeping them in our prayers. Hopefully when the world settles down, we will be able to continue on this journey together in Truth and Reconciliation.

Since the lockdown started, I’ve been creating a monthly “All Cooped Up” newsletter for our church folk and everyone who receives it, is encouraged to send it on to others. It’s full of jokes (mostly COVID-19 and senior!) and I am amazed at the jokes that people have created. It certainly provides lots of laughs, which are so important at this time. If you would like to view the next issue, just email me at janetpanting@gmail.com, and I’ll send you out a copy.

A message from Rev. Will...

Recently, I listened to an interview with a well-known American lawyer and legal scholar. Most of the interview’s subject matter was of no relevance to my life’s situation, but it made for interesting background noise while I did some work around the house. What caught my particular attention, however, was a question about this lawyer’s age. Still working actively in his mid seventies, the interviewer asked him, Why? What was motivating him? After all, he had enough money in the bank to retire and nothing left to prove in his profession. The lawyer answered that he still enjoyed his work and felt that he was making a difference. He would retire, he said, when either

he, or his wife, noticed that he began looking backwards at his legacy instead of forward at what might still be accomplished.

Whatever our age or stage in life, there is a good lesson there for each of us: look forward. It’s great to have good memories and do some occasional reminiscing, but it is much more life-giving to look forwards than to look backwards. For good or ill, the past cannot be retrieved or changed. The future, within reason, is what we will make of it. Possibilities of what might be, for ourselves and for others, give us hope and inspiration.

As people of faith, we can look to the uncertainties of the future with confidence, trusting that God is wise, loving and active. It’s as the old saying goes, “I don’t know what tomorrow holds, but I know who holds tomorrow.” The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome, “in hope, we are saved.” Let’s encourage one another to look forward, with a confident hope, knowing that there will be good gifts to enjoy, important things to be done and great works of God to behold.

Take care and stay safe!

If you would like to join either of our Zoom services, please call Rev. Will for the information. To reach Rev. Will Houghton Phone: 249-877-0393 (local call) or Email: howareyall2@gmail.com.

Check out the websites at: www.ForestHomeUC.ca or email: foresthomeunitedchurch@yahoo.ca and www.DalstonCrownHillUnitedChurch.net or email: dalcrown@gmail.com.

Carley News

by Louise Calvert-Dale

Kelly Skinner-Meyer now sits as the new chair of the Carley Community Hall Board, replacing Louise Calvert-Dale after ten years in the role. Kelly comes to the position with many years of experience. She served as a volunteer for three years and as the Hall's Board Chair for five years. She then stepped down to serve as Ward 2 Councillor in Oro-Medonte for four years. Since then, Kelly and her husband, Barry, have been living abroad. COVID-19 has reshaped many lives and Kelly and Barry are now home in the Carley Valley. The timing was perfect for her to come back and to serve our community again.

Kelly is an excellent leader and communicator. She is dedicated to Carley Community Hall, its heritage, and its preservation. Kelly is looking forward to leading the Carley Community Hall team into the 21st century, post-COVID-19 world. She realizes the challenges that may lay ahead to create fundraising opportunities for the hall.

The Carley Community Hall is Kelly's neighbour and she cares for it very much. She feels that we have learned a lot during this pandemic, about resiliency, being creative and the importance of home, family and the preservation of everything that is dear to us. Kelly looks forward to more normal times when Carley Community Hall can welcome the public through its doors.

We all miss our community events and the opportunity to meet, greet, shop, feast, and network. We will be back for you in safer times. In the meantime stay safe, stay in touch with your neighbors, get out and walk in our beautiful Oro-Medonte. And please keep checking our website for future updates on the Hall.

The Township of Oro Medonte will be working on a phased re-opening plan of its buildings based on the Provincial Public Health guidelines. For information, please refer to

their website:
www.oro-medonte.ca.

The "country way" is alive and well at Carley Community Hall: people supporting one another, teamwork, giving back to community. We hope we will see you soon in healthier times.

Carley Community Hall is located at 396 Warminster Sideroad between Line 8 and Line 9. For bookings call the Township of Oro-Medonte at 705-487-2171 or email recreation@oro-medonte.ca for details. Check out the Carley Community Hall website at www.carleycommunityhall.com and at [Facebook.com/carleycommunityhall](https://www.facebook.com/carleycommunityhall).



Sustainable Simcoe North

by Anna Proctor

Lockdown and stay-at-home is a great time to hone your sustainability practices, and educate yourself in sustainability. Maybe you have a little extra time on your hands, so now is the perfect time to take some online workshops or courses in greening, or upgrade your house to be more energy efficient. Here are some online courses that are available, in these areas:

The below are more general courses about sustainability:

www.edx.org/learn/sustainability

www.coursera.org/courses?query=sustainability

Here are some courses on greening your home:

www.regenerative.com/course-catalog/greener-home-course

www.theartofsimple.net/tips-to-go-green-at-home

www.biofriendlyplanet.com/green-ideas/eco-friendly/12-small-changes-to-make-your-home-more-eco-friendly

This one is about living a greener lifestyle:

www.greenchoices.org/going-green/environmental-training/courses-green-living

These pandemic times are also a great opportunity to put your money where your mouth is, regarding the future of our planet. Wetlands are hugely important ways to manage carbon in our environment, and development can threaten wetlands and the rural character of our area that we so love.

Think about getting involved in local efforts to protect wetlands, lands, and forests, such as the Couchiching Conservancy, Friends of the Copeland Forest, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and more. Here are some links for you to explore:

www.couchichingconserv.ca

www.copelandfriends.ca

www.lsrca.on.ca

Let's us this time at home to think about what we want our world to look like in 20, 50 or 100 years...and what kind of legacy we want to leave our children. We will come out of this pandemic and when we do, we need to pay attention to the crisis in our planet, and work together to fix it.

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