

INSIDE...

Porch Views: Be patient..... p.6

Fuel for mental well-being p.8

Biscuit box school, Buckskin Dick p.12

Owner hopes for July opening of Valley's first pot shop



ROGER PAUL
BARRY'S BAY

Recent passers-by of the former Mayflower building at 48 Bay Street, Barry's Bay (pictured above) will have noticed evidence of changes taking place. This is because of renovations to turn the building into what will be the Bay's first pot shop. Valley resident Mike Klobouk formed a company a year ago which has been granted a Cannabis Retail Operator licence by the province. All that now remains is to get the store authorized as complying with site regulations which include distance from schools, surveillance and alarm systems, and ensuring that the interior of the store cannot be seen from the outside. .

Klobouk told *The Current* that so far progress has not been delayed by the pandemic, apart from some deliveries of construction materials. The renovations at the front of the building are extensive because he is installing a

wheelchair ramp and automatic doors to make the building fully accessible. Klobouk still hopes that the store, to be called BayBud Cannabis, will open in early July and he expects that he will soon advertise for staff.

He has already received his manager's licence. To be eligible to work there, employees must be older than 19, will have to pass a police background check and must have the CanSell qualification. "Those are the basics. People who are interested in applying will need to educate the customers. I want to be able to distribute information about consumption and the different aspects of the products, CBD vs. THC and so on. The educational component is going to be very important as far as running the store," said Klobouk.

He was asked about local competition, especially that provided at Golden Lake on the Pikwàkanagàn reserve. He responded by saying, "The main thing is that the products I'll be selling have

been tested and authorized by the government. I really don't know what kind of testing the products at Golden Lake are subjected to." Under the terms of his licence, he is allowed to sell only products that are available from the Ontario Cannabis Store (OCS) which means that they are subject to stringent tests to ensure there are no contaminants or fungus, etc.

Klobouk asked *The Current* to emphasize to readers that BayBud Cannabis will take every step to ensure that it complies with all laws and regulations. He added that, contrary to some rumours, it is just going to be a legal pot shop, not a grow op.

Mike's wife, Diane, was a teacher until her retirement in 2017. Mike previously operated his own software engineering consultancy.

Readers can follow the company's progress on their website www.BayBud.ca and can contact them by email at info@BayBud.ca

COVID-19 perspectives: flatten the curve, be kind

ELSER LEE ARCHER
MADAWASKA VALLEY

“As eerie and strange as it feels to be hunkering down in my house, watching society shut its doors and lock itself down around me, there is some part of me that feels warm and affectionate and so very proud of my fellow human beings. Social distancing isn’t easy, but seeing us all band together to become a whole greater than the sum of its parts gives me some needed light and hope.” @Revelatori, Facebook post March 15, 2020, image p.3.

I’ve listened to a few declare conspiracy theories dated back to May 2019, and heard our Prime Minister describe Canada’s first phase response to the economic impact of COVID-19 but, at the end of the day, we all must find a way to live through and beyond the self-isolation now required of many. “Be kind to each other” is a scripture we taught our children when they all piled into the same bath! There is a silver lining displayed through corporate responsibility from the private sector and government,

increased family connections, societal slowdown from the “rat-race,” and a time to be kind to each other.

Recently, e-commerce giants stopped individuals from hoarding sanitizer and toilet paper to exploit others. The New York Times showed a photo depicting 17,700 bottles of hand sanitizer that could no longer be sold. The more I read about price gougers, I learned that some realized that perhaps they should donate the products. In our Township, a local business owner and friend reached out and gifted me a package of toilet paper saying, “Don’t be shy if you need some.” We had talked about my visit to the grocery stores last Friday when the toilet paper had run out and several shelves were empty. In response, I received kindness.

This crisis has put everyone on pause to reflect on social distancing and how we do business at home. International trade works when there’s no international crisis, but domestic production and manufacturing can potentially work outside of that crisis. A year ago, the federal Minister of Innovation, Sci-

ence and Industry, Navdeep Bains, said, “The government allocated funds for the purchase of personal protective equipment and essential medical supplies.”

On March 18, 2020, the federal government reached out to domestic manufacturers asking them to “step in to fill critical shortages of medical supplies needed to fight the coronavirus, including the possibility of switching over their production lines from goods such as auto parts.”

Around the world, manufacturers are retooling existing factories. For example, “France ... LVMH ... producing hand sanitizer versus Dior and Givenchy perfumes; British Prime Minister has asked Ford, Honda, Rolls Royce and other manufactures to make ventilators and other health-care equipment.” (*Globe and Mail Business*).

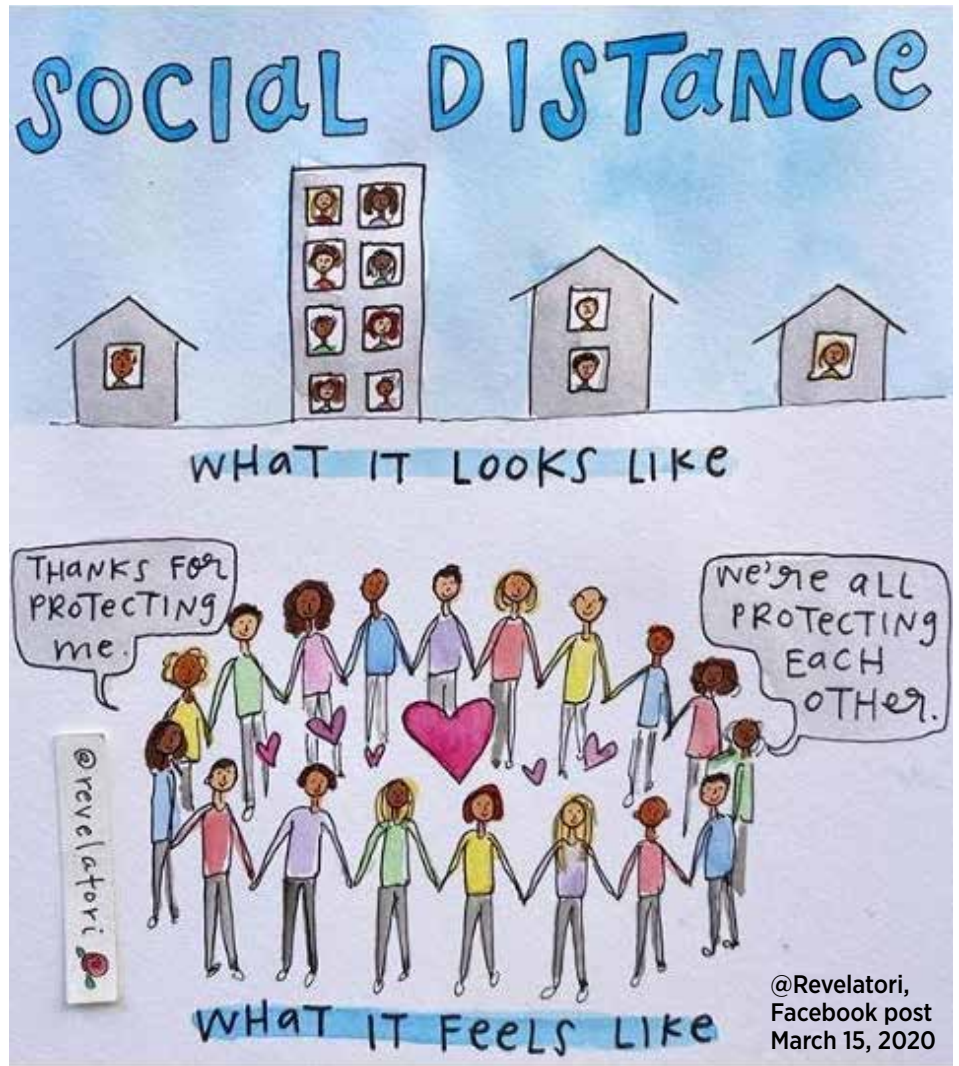
Equally impressive were the announcements that our federal and provincial governments are working together to provide an \$82 billion social safety net to aid workers, families and businesses. This includes small business wage subsidies, revising the Employment Standards Act to introduce Emergency Support Benefits in early April for up to 15 weeks for the self-employed who are instituting self-isolation/quarantine to care for loved ones or themselves; a moratorium on student loan payments until September 30th, 2020; Canada Child Tax benefit top-ups for minimum wage earners. (*Canada Economic Response Plan*).

As a social worker I participated in a Zoom call this week with families across the country concerned about their loved ones who were self-isolating for a variety of reasons. Locally, some seniors were isolated by icy private roads and only just got out to the grocery store. Still, others receive social assistance or pension cheques at the end of the month and cannot hustle and compete to get basic necessities like food and toilet paper. With so much fear and anxiety it is difficult for some to see

past the “panic-demic” to reflect on the needs of others. However, I’ve watched tensions in families melt away as they focus on the key thing: “flattening the curve of the COVID-19 by advocating for their family members with the goal of protecting the more vulnerable.”

My colleagues and I are helping families to take precautions, share challenges and ideas. It is about how to work together using technology ethically and creatively to interact with clients and co-workers while encouraging simple pleasures like walking/hiking, reading, dancing and painting. Additionally, younger family members are ramping up a network of support to purchase groceries, pick up medications and check in with seniors so that they aren’t at risk trying to hustle in crowds to meet basic needs. The silver lining extends to the environment... with people working from home, there are fewer cars on the road everywhere. Fewer factories and buses are polluting urban centres, which in turn reduces global carbon emissions and pollution in general. (*Science Alert*).

I will not take for granted the social safety nets of government, our local health services, the extra time to love my family, more time to pray for others, the reduced carbon footprint and increased opportunities for all of us to be kind to each other.



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MV Food Bank has challenges to meet

DANIELLE PAUL
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Madawaska Valley Food Bank, the local non-profit that helps feed Valley residents, has more than one mountain to climb in the next few months. MV Food Bank is searching for a new home—not for the first time, having set up shop in several locations since it began more than 25 years ago in the basement of St. Lawrence O’Toole Church in Barry’s Bay.

Its present location at 19460 Opeongo Line (Hwy.60) in Barry’s Bay was generously offered to the Bank by Madawaska Valley Association for Community Living (MVACL). Although the two non-profit organizations have a very friendly and co-operative arrangement, MVACL now requires the premises for its programming needs, so the Food Bank needs to move out before September 30, 2020.

But just as they began the search for new premises, the restrictions required by the COVID-19 virus hit the Valley. In less than a week, the volunteers implemented a series of changes that transformed MV Food Bank from a shopping model to a drive-through model.

But it wasn’t just the delivery process that has changed. Volunteers told *The Current* that they catered for about 40 percent more clients on March 24th compared to the same period last year. Add to the mix the fact that with Easter coming, the next Food Bank session won’t happen until April 14th – a three week gap for clients to cope with. This adds another level of uncertainty for local people who need help.

MV Food Bank is open twice a month and serves some of the Valley’s most vulnerable residents in Barry’s Bay, Combermere, Wilno, Whitney, Madawaska, and Palmer Rapids—as defined by the 756, 758 and 637 telephone exchanges. Last fall 35 to 50 households used the MV Food Bank.

It was a different story this winter though, with up to 60 households (150 people) per session—households ranging in size from a single person to families with five or more children. And that was before implementation of the



Clockwise from Top: Volunteers Pat McNamara and Chris Thompson carry-out to cars. Terry Newcombe with seedlings. Patricia McLee and Paul Thompson with empty food bank freezer

latest round of restrictions to prevent spread of COVID-19.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Monetary donations: You can provide monetary support either by e-mail transfers to mvfoodbank@gmail.com or by donating online through Canada Helps at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/9655>

Grow-A-Row: The mild spring weather combined with enforced home-stays for many people means that Valley gardeners can get a head start on their seedlings. Barry’s Bay gar-

dener and Food Bank volunteer Terry Newcombe asks that as you sow your own indoor veggie seedlings over the next few weeks, please sow extras to donate the resulting transplants to Food Bank clients. Newcombe says, “Nothing—no box of cookies or package of meat, disappears as quickly from our tables as the trays of tomato seedlings every spring.” Local gardening donors get to help their community by doing what they already love doing and the Grow-A-Row program also teaches a valuable skill to families, both adults and their children.

This season your seedlings will also help MV Food Bank deal with a huge increase in the number of its clients due to COVID-19 job losses. You get something fun to do, they get healthy food ... everybody wins. All types of seedlings are welcome. To donate, simply label them and drop them off at 188 Paugh Lake Rd in Barry's Bay, on the second and fourth Mondays of the month. For further information, please call Terry Newcombe at 613-756-3344

DO YOU HAVE A HOME FOR THE MV FOOD BANK?

Earlier this month, volunteers Patricia McLee and Paul Thompson told *The Current* about the kind of space the bank needs. They said that MV Food Bank began its house hunt by sharing its list of requirements with the Township of Madawaska Valley, who had previously said, "Let us know what you need from us." Food Bank directors also undertook a tour of local vacant buildings and spoke with some Valley landlords earlier this year. Now they have gone public with a media campaign, in the hope that someone, somewhere, has a suitable space. The Food Bank is very flexible about its needs:

- 350 square feet, in a lockable part of a building. This could be several rooms. (Additional space for Food Bank clients to use as a waiting area would be nice.)
- Access for large delivery trucks to get close to the building is essential
- Some parking for Food Bank clients. (A garage door, loading dock, or the possibility to add one would be helpful.)
- A minimum of two electrical circuits.
- Running water is extremely helpful though not essential. Access to a bathroom would also be great. (A home environment with kitchen and bathroom works well and means that the Food Bank can run additional programs for clients.)
- Access by Food Bank volunteers outside business hours would be helpful but is not essential.
- A location in Barry's Bay is preferred (many Food Bank clients and volunteers walk) but other sites would be considered.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

In return, MV Food Bank can offer a prospective landlord:

- As a charitable organization, MV Food Bank is able to issue charitable receipts in lieu of rent.
- The food bank is able to pay electrical charges and a modest rent, if necessary. (It prefers to spend

available funds on food.)

- The food bank has its own property and general liability insurance.

For more information or to provide help, please email MV Food Bank at mvfoodbank@gmail.com



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Editor's note:

Valley residents show their true colours and neighbourliness during the course of this COVID-19 pandemic. Our thanks to all those who stay in the front lines to provide the rest of us with essential services.

We at *The Current* are keeping you up to date with pandemic news by publishing all official announcements received from municipal, provincial or federal levels of government in a dedicated section of our website entitled Latest official statements on COVID-19. To give you all a rest from COVID-19, we have deliberately not included those official notices in this March 31st edition.

This downloadable version of *The Current* is available free from our website. Please consider printing copies for any friends and family without internet, especially those in self-isolation that you may be helping.

Check online for COVID-19 related announcements and all the need-to-know information for Valley residents at: madvalleycurrent.com

PORCH VIEWS

We just have to do our best and be patient

MARK WOERMKE
BARRY'S BAY

We are pleased to welcome back Mark Woermke who writes this Porch Views column from his perspective as a teacher providing distance learning from his kitchen. —The Current

The last time you heard from me, I explained that in my pre-retirement planning, I had decided to make Renfrew County German research my chief focus. I came to that after observing a number of retirees in action, sampling a number of activities, and evaluating my interests and my willingness to “be busy” in that anticipated state of freedom.

Since writing that, I started lining up those proverbial ducks and considering possible retirement dates. The preferred one would have been a natural break in the school year and therefore the easiest transition for my students and supervisors. Another might have been decided upon seeing my September teaching assignment or class lists. The third would have been the least desirable and least likely option – the give-them-the-finger retirement. (I don't think I am the only person who has these thoughts occasionally.)

At the moment, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all plans for retirement — or anything else for that matter — are on hold.

Schools have been closed and the Premier of Ontario said last week that they are not reopening on April 6 as had been previously hoped. (I am not surprised.) So, I am at home, social-distancing, keeping in touch with my principal and colleagues, checking in daily with students and doing my best to convert my curriculum to a format that can be shared by email or an electronic platform.

Obviously, my students are anxious. All of them are in Grade 12 and therefore potential graduates.

Society — and this includes parents and schools — have placed a lot of pressure on young people to meet milestones, get accepted into specific programs, and to win scholarships. Having taught Grade



Online teaching from Barry's Bay. PHOTO: MARK WOERMKE

12 students for a long time, I have seen the collective stress level rise tremendously in recent years. Now they are faced with an unprecedented crisis that even the Boomers can't fathom. We don't know what's coming. What will it mean to be a graduate in the 2020 cohort?

Teachers are communicating with students and sending them activities and work. It is our job, and besides following health advisories and taking social distancing seriously, it is something we can do to help others get through the pandemic. The contact, the routine, and the intellectual stimulation are good for our students. They are good for us too. What happens when large numbers of teachers and students get sick, we can't foresee. All we can do is calmly proceed with what we can do today.

There are many challenges. Not all students have access to the internet at home, but school boards are working on this. It will be hard to give students with learning disabilities the support they need, but again work is being done. Some students are very busy looking after younger siblings while parents are working in essential services. There are students who want to do their part for the community, are working longer hours at grocery stores and

they are very frightened. Many heads of families have no work and insufficient resources. Some students are sick, are self-quarantining or have family members who are sick.

Everyone is in the same boat. From an educational standpoint, educators and students in elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities are all trying to navigate an unprecedented situation. Will students be able to complete their courses? Will colleges and universities process applications? Will school resume before June? None of these questions can be answered at the moment. We just have to do our best and be patient.

I could get bent out of shape over losing that planned, calm and easy journey to retirement, but there are far more serious things to consider. Every one of us is putting our lifestyles and our plans on hold. Right now, the most important thing we can do is protect the health of the most vulnerable in our community, maintain the integrity of the healthcare system and try our best to maintain our own health and the health of our loved ones. Agendas and schedules don't matter much in the face of mortality.

My friends, Danielle and Roger, asked if I would consider writing some-

thing for *The Madawaska Valley Current*. They suggested something light, maybe even humorous, a distraction to help people cope with the pandemic. I am anticipating a poor grade on this assignment! Maybe I can regain that A-average on my next one.

My English students are just finishing Shakespeare's *King Lear*. An interesting piece published last week in *The Guardian* posited the Bard may have been in lockdown when he wrote it. While we can't be certain of that, we do know that Shakespeare was no stranger to the bubonic plague. His hometown lost a quarter of its population when he was a child; theatres were frequently closed throughout his career; and in 1606, the year *King Lear* was first performed, London experienced a major

outbreak that was especially virulent in his neighbourhood. Despite the suffering and despair in this particularly bleak play, Shakespeare ends with hope. After experiencing rapid, drastic and tragic changes in their lives, the surviving characters, Edgar and Albany, gain greater appreciation for life and humanity and they re-order their priorities. That makes them better people and better rulers. By extension, it makes their country stronger.

Folks here are facing drastic changes too. However, all the people who shelter in this valley among the hills, wherever they are from and whenever they arrived, have experienced and survived adversity before. And they have always maintained a hopeful attitude. Things are difficult; they are not going to get

better for a while; and they may even get worse. But we also know that Valley people are generous, hopeful, strong and (here I draw on a lifetime of experience) stubborn.

Sincere thanks to everyone who is taking social-distancing seriously to flatten-the-curve, and to all of the essential service workers in our community. I especially highlight those who are keeping our grocery stores and pharmacy open, stocked and safe; those who are working in our clinic, hospital, nursing and retirement homes; those who are providing home support or work for community living; and those who are maintaining our essential municipal services and public utilities. I am certainly not the first to say it: they are heroes.

Hang in there, folks!

Cabin Fever Trivia Quiz brings on the blues

THE CURRENT MADAWASKA VALLEY

Originally scheduled for the depths of winter but postponed due to weather, the Madawaska Valley Public Library's first Cabin Fever Trivia Quiz was held on March 12 at the Barry's Bay Legion Branch 406. Twelve teams of six competitors vied for the coveted trophy, which was eventually won after "four gruelling rounds" by a team called *We Snow That*.

Library CEO Karen Filipkowski said they were pleased with such a good turnout for their first winter quiz. Library Board chair Frances Mawson welcomed everyone and thanked all who helped make it possible. This included emcee Trevor Smith-Millar of MooseFM, the judges, scorers, and the many volunteers from both library and Legion. Special thanks went to local sponsors for their support with door prizes and snacks: Algonquin East Animal Clinic (Dr. Anne Burkart), Andrea Budarick, Back Country Studios (Helen Potvin), Barry's Bay Home Building Centre, Barry's Bay Metro, Linda's Original Cards (Linda Neuman), Pantry Savings, Shell Canada, Shulist Family Farms, So Creative Home Rugs (Nicole Aubé), Spring to Life Farms, and *The Madawaska Valley Current*.

The first round was sickly sweet with



We Snow That from left Pete Burchat, Bob Corrigan, Pauline Burchat, Tom Burchat, Ben van Wesenbeeck, Dave Lowell in front.

many questions about maple, maple products, maple syrup and even more maple. The second round, however, was completely different. It required the teams to write Cabin Fever-themed lyrics for their choice of two blues tunes: *House of the Rising Sun* or *Folsom Prison Blues*. A panel of three music judges conferred and eventually awarded Best Song for *Cabin Fever Blues*—sung to the tune of *Folsom Prison Blues*, lyrics by the *Station Keepers*: Joanne Olsen, John Olsen, Karen Yakabuski, Marie Scott-Vileneuve, Clifford Blank, Terry Recoskie. Barry's Bay resident Ken Ramsden performed the winning number, but

not before sharing lyrics from several runner-up teams. He noted that "snow plows" and "pain" featured prominently in most teams' songs, and gave special credit to *The Greenthumbs* whose failure to rhyme did not diminish the humorous result of their creative efforts.

The winning teams' scores were impressive: *We Snow That* led the field with 71 points. Other places were closely fought as *The Greenthumbs* tied with *The BabyBroomers* for second place at 61 points, and close behind them was *Over The Hogline* with 60 points. Filipkowski praised all participants for their efforts at the end of the evening.

Fuel for your mental well-being

BRENDA STRACK
BARRY'S BAY

As uncertainty and fear surrounding the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic dominates our minds and lives, note that in addition to taking measures to safeguard ourselves physically, it is equally important to do so mentally.

The COVID-19 virus brings a lot of “unknowns.” It is a topic of destruction that continues to contaminate not only the bodies of vulnerable individuals but is also buying up unauthorized real estate in otherwise healthy minds.

The majority of us have never experienced anything like it. Sure, we hear about things like this happening in other parts of the world. We have become accustomed to devastation, destruction, and deadly plagues when it is “over there.” Although we see it and hear about it, some of us can't quite fathom the reality of what others are truly going through, but this—this is different. It is not just “there” any more. It is “here,” everywhere; it now affects us—all of us!

People are beginning to panic. Hoarding (aka grocery shopping) means employees are working overtime to stock shelves that are emptied the moment they are filled. Healthcare workers are being pushed beyond their limits, as are a number of other first responders. Non-essential businesses have been mandated to close their doors and toilet paper has become the world's Number One form of comfort and security.

In other words, due to the excessive amount of negativity surrounding us, our judgement has been clouded, making it difficult for many people to make rational decisions. We are bombarded by news, social media and those around us spreading discouragement and fear. What's worse is that we are allowing it, day in and day out.

WHAT ABOUT MEDIA DISTANCING?

What would happen if we didn't turn on the TV, radio or social media for a time? Would it change the situation we are in? No. But what it would do is this:

Imagine our body is a car that requires a nervous system to make it function.



PHOTO: PEXELS.COM

Let's say the gas pedal is the sympathetic nervous system and the brake is the parasympathetic nervous system.

When the brake is applied, our body is in rest mode, our heart rate and blood pressure decreases, giving the body an opportunity to feel calm and detox effectively.

But when you step on the gas pedal, adrenaline is released. Increased heart rate, blood pressure and breathing pushes our body into “alert or danger” mode, also known as the fight or flight response.

Exposure to constant negativity and stress takes its toll on our complete being. It's like keeping our foot on the gas pedal and never applying the brake. The gas gauge will eventually show “empty.” Its purpose is not to immediately stop the car from running, but rather to provide us with a warning that refuelling in a short span of time is necessary to keep running.

Our bodies have not been designed to live in a constant state of stress or danger, so my advice is:

Pay attention to the gas gauge. Refuelling is required.

PRACTICAL MEASURES

Should we be careful, stay informed and take precautions? Absolutely! Wearing gloves, hand-washing, disinfecting surfaces, and practicing physical distancing helps protect our physical being from exposure to COVID-19. Similarly, media and news distancing can help to protect our mental well-being.

Everyone is going through this. No one is exempt.

In order to get this pandemic under control, we all need to take personal

responsibility for our actions. As a community, we need to consider the needs of those who do not have the resources to, for instance, purchase large quantities of food and make a decision to share. Encouragement and support is not solely found in word but also in deed.

Don't rely on toilet paper for comfort. Instead, rely on the resource that lies deep within the hearts of all of us: the gift of love and selflessness, the gift of instilling hope amid despair. Let's all step up and do our part.

TIPS TO DE-STRESS:

There are numerous ways to de-stress. Here are a few suggestions:

- listen to music
- play a game
- laugh
- paint or draw
- practice 7/11 breathing: breathe in for count of 7, then release the breath for a count of 11
- write down your worries

Author's note: Living in isolation can be detrimental to an individual's health and well being. If you are experiencing fear, loneliness or helplessness, or just need someone to talk to, please call me at 613 633 7674. During the month of April, all consultations will be free. Please be advised that your identity and information will always remain confidential.

About the author: Brenda Strack, a Valley native, is a certified counsellor in Barry's Bay practising as Madawaska Valley Counselling Services. She uses Integrative Counselling to tailor a therapeutic approach specific to the needs of each individual. For more information see mvcounselling.com

Free online resources for stay-at-home enjoyment: alternatives to television

The recent announcement by major Canadian telecommunication companies that they are waiving internet overage charges because of the pandemic is welcome news. Not only is it welcome to those who are working from home, but also other shut-ins who want an alternative to television as a source for their entertainment.

For the latter, it is good to know that there is an abundant supply of free online sources of books, music and movies that can help fill the gap caused through virtual imprisonment.

THE INTERNET ARCHIVE » ARCHIVE.ORG

This is a non-profit library of millions of free books, movies, software, music, websites and more. It even has a section providing access to historical PC games. Want a trip down memory lane? Look at demos for Sim City, Call of Duty and many others.

If you feel inclined to use your spare time to start a major research project, it will also link you to the libraries of many major universities.

YOUTUBE » YOUTUBE.COM

Everybody has heard of YouTube but how many of you know that it is much, much more than short informational and quirky videos? Think of your favourite musical artist(s) and simply type their name(s) in the search bar. It is likely you will then be given a choice of dozens or even more of their videos, including live performances. If your taste veers more towards the classical, simply type in a composer's name and in short order you will be able to listen to a full symphony concert from one of the world's great orchestras. If you are fortunate to be able to play it back through a home theatre system, that concert can be heard in surround sound that realistically places you right smack in the auditorium. It too has free movies.

ART GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS

Most of the world's leading art galleries and museums provide online virtual tours. In recognition of the fact that access to the originals is out of reach for now, The Guardian newspaper has recently published an article listing ten of the best with links to them. If you have

always wanted to go to the Vatican Museums or to London's National Gallery, now is your chance in the comfort of your own home to marvel at the riches they contain. <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/mar/23/10-of-the-worlds-best-virtual-museum-and-art-gallery-tours>

While you're online you can also learn more about the Valley's history by checking out a few virtual museum exhibits from some of the 27 museums and local heritage organizations in the Renfrew County Museums Network. RenfrewCountyMuseums.org

BOOKS

If you are a member of the Madawaska Valley Public Library, you can access a variety of resources on the library's website. Their e-resources page includes access to OverDrive for downloads of e-books and audio books, and EBSCO to download current magazines via Flipster, World Book, Mango to learn a language, and Tumblebooks for children and teens. New resources are being added regularly. Madawaskavalleylibrary.ca

In addition to that, there are many other online sources of free books including the Internet Archive referred to above—if you just google “Free online books” you will find enough choices to satisfy every taste.

Some of these, including Internet Archive and Project Gutenberg, enable you to read the books online without having to download them.

PODCASTS

There's an enormous world of podcasts out there that you can either stream or download to listen at your leisure. Lately Valley attention has focused on the free podcasts about local history to be found on The Opeongo Line. Although the Railway Station and other venues for recording in front of a live audience are not available just now, new recordings are still being produced. Check the latest Rural Routes episode about the history of women's hockey in the Valley She shoots! she scores! Search for The Opeongo Line on any podcast player app.

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As we face this pandemic be thankful for neighbours

JAMES DI FIORE
KILLALOE

When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” —*Fred Rogers*.

When my family moved to Killaloe almost four years ago, I was warned that locals would view me as an outsider. I was told that people in these parts stuck together, and that there was a palpable difference between how they treated each other vs. how they would inevitably treat me, even though my wife was born and raised here.

I am happy to report that none of those warnings materialized, and after years of meeting countless residents I can honestly say that I only dislike a few of them, but that’s only because I cover local politics.

Jokes aside, when the news of COVID-19 began to trickle in, the very first thought that came to mind was how thankful I was to be in self isolation up in this community. Like I said to my city friends over the past few years, the people here do not put on masks. You are more genuine, more authentic, less likely to judge people for their clothes or their income than your urban counterparts. You’d be surprised how important those characteristics are for those of us who spent decades in Toronto and its suburban outskirts.

Yes, everything is so uncertain right now. We are worried about our vulnerable loved ones. Some of us are wondering how we will pay the bills or put food on the table. The television and internet seem to offer a constant loop of harrowing statements by politicians trying to cushion the blow by striking the right tone, even as they tell us to stay at home for the foreseeable future. The worldwide death toll keeps rising, and the only thing experts seem to be certain about is that the immediate and long term prospects of returning to our daily routines are very uncertain.

During these times, it is important to find the silver linings, and I think I know where to find them.

All around this community there are people on the front lines making our



lives a little less worrying, and a little safer. They work as nurses, elderly caregivers, grocery store clerks, and others who are putting their own health at risk so that we can find some semblance of normalcy while we wait for this crisis to end. Think of how much worse all this would be without people who place selflessness ahead of their own personal safety, and how quickly our modest community would grind to a halt if we did not have them stepping up for all of us.

BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE

For the past two weeks, ever since the government began recommending social distance, self isolation and even quarantines for those infected, I have listened to beautiful stories of humanity. Everything from a neighbour shoveling all the driveways on their street, to young people offering to go to the grocery store for elderly residents so they don’t have to be put into harm’s way.

Families are spending more time together, a powerful ancillary benefit of this pandemic. Speaking for myself, this past week as my family and I hunkered down together, each day has been both surreal and rewarding. Sure, there are moments when the isolation makes everyone a little stir crazy, but those moments are fleeting... for now. Maybe I’m just projecting, because lately whenever I have found myself grumpy or awash with cabin fever, I retreat to why we are here in the first place and how

other families have lost loved ones, and I become quietly thankful as I watch my son play with his dinosaurs or my daughter show me her latest dance move.

SILVER LININGS

I’ve been speaking with friends still living in Toronto, and many of them seem pretty stressed out. They are responsible enough to adhere to social distancing or self isolation requests, but most of them tell stories of blatant irresponsible behaviours from fellow Torontonians; people gathering in large crowds, hoarding essential items from stores, and taking a generally dismissive tone about the seriousness of the situation.

Not here though. Sure, we have the benefit of three million fewer people, but we also have a foundation in this community where the cultural reflex is to make sure we are looking out for one another. You might not see Madawaska Valley precisely the same way as I do, but I can assure you this place is sprinkled with salt of the earth, lovely folks ready to lend a helping hand.

No pandemic can touch that part of us. It’s stitched into the fabric of the people, carved into our character like the hills within the valley, and reinforced by endless examples of good deeds and sentiment.

That’s what makes this community feel like home, even to an outsider like me.

Newly formed group mounts campaign against Chippawa Shores development

ROGER PAUL
MADAWASKA VALLEY

The Current has learned of the formation of a group of residents opposed to the re-zoning of the Chippawa Shores development because of environmental and safety concerns. This follows the Madawaska Valley Council Meeting of March 3, 2020 when Council approved the draft of the proposed Condominium Conditions to be incorporated in a Zoning By-Law Amendment.

According to one of its founders, Doug De La Matter, the group calling itself Friends of the Madawaska Watershed intends to circulate a petition in the near future soliciting support from citizens who share their concerns.

Because of restrictions imposed by the pandemic, for the time being that petition will only be available online. Their goal is to continue to lobby MV Council to postpone the passing of the Zoning By-Law Amendment that is expected to be received from the County Planning Officer in the very near future, until significant improvements are made.

De La Matter and others spoke about their concerns at the Public Meeting held August 29th, 2019. He told *The Current* that the opposition stems from

concerns about the proposed conditions including:

- setbacks
- size and location of docks
- increases in boat traffic on the river and resulting erosion of the riverbanks
- maintenance of natural vegetation along shoreline setbacks
- inadequate natural buffer zones around wetlands and vulnerable lakes
- lack of recognition of lakeshore capacity on small landlocked lakes

Friends of the Madawaska Watershed also point out the difficulties of leaving enforcement of all conditions to the Condominium Corporation's Board, whose members would not be sufficiently arms-length from any individuals who may not comply with the conditions.

In describing the group's motivation De La Matter said, "A well-designed development can be a true asset to the community. We all would welcome it. Unfortunately, the present design is likely to create more problems than it solves for the residents of the area, the township and the Watershed community."

Readers can get more background material and sign the online petition at mwfriends.ca or contact the group by email at mwfriends@bell.net.



De La Matter at public meeting August 29, 2019.

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VALLEY HERITAGE



Biscuit box school

BOB CORRIGAN
BARRY'S BAY

This school picture dates back to 1924. Perhaps someone can tell us where the school was located and why it was known locally as the "Biscuit Box School." Maybe some reader can make corrections to the names of the students or the spelling of their names. We also hope someone can provide the missing first name for one of the Mask boys.

Front Row: Tom Murray, Bernard Murray, Ambrose Chippior, Tommie Plebon. **Middle Row:** Alfie Coulas, Peter Maika, Olive Murray, Eleanor Maika, Genevieve Shalla, Rosie Yeretch, Gertie Yakabuskie, Agnes Cybulskie, Florence Ritza, Lola Sullivan. **Back Row:** Lornie Langevin, Joe Biderskie, Bronas Mask, _____ Mask, Jean Langevin, Annie Zilney, Agnes Burchat, Martha Mintha, Annie Mask, Stella Coulas, Stella Nicholson.

UPDATE ON FIRE RANGER

In the original article, I had said that Buckskin Dick's surname was

Conroy. At least, that is what I had been told. However, it looks like the correct name is Dick Conway, according to an article that appeared in *Barry's Bay This Week* on March 8, 1989. Phil Conway was always interested in anyone named Conway so he did some research and for the newspaper that he owned. The piece reproduces a story written by Ralph Bice for the 1989 *Morgensen's Almanac* for farmers, trappers and prospectors. The full text is available online in *The Current*.

Armed with the corrected name, I went searching and came across Dick in the 1921 census for Murchison Township (known today as South Algonquin Township) in Nipissing District. His entry listed him as Richard Conway, age 22, single, and living by himself in a house that he owned. He was born in Ontario (c1899) while both of his parents had been born in Ireland. He could read and write,

and he was a Catholic. His occupation was recorded as fire ranger.

I could not find Richard Conway in the 1911 or 1901 census, nor could I find any record of his birth. If some reader has any idea of when he died, or what became of him, it would be of interest to many people.

NOTE: If you are interested in having a picture and story featured in The Madawaska Valley Current, please submit the information to Bob Corrigan at madvalleycurrent@gmail.com (subject Heritage Photos) or mail your photo to Bob c/o The Current at PO Box 1097, Barry's Bay KOJ 1B0 (originals will be returned).

