

# Preparing for the Future

**T**his summer and autumn more people than ever have been walking, jogging or cycling on the country road outside my office window. Some couples walk together every morning. Other people walk alone, at a brisk pace, some wearing headphones. A young man and woman push a baby in a stroller. Dogs are regularly being taken for walks. One woman jogs with her Australian Shepherd. In warm weather I used to see the same solitary cyclists out for a spin.

Everyone is keeping a good distance apart. Yet they've been reaching out verbally, to say hello or comment on the weather or ask how you're doing. For some of us – many of us? – these outings are the only socializing we do all day.

I hope that people continue to get out during winter. It's expected to be a long, difficult season for COVID cases. There is talk about COVID fatigue and depression. What can help is regular fresh air and exercise, even when you don't feel like it. Especially when you don't feel like it. I've taken my dog for a walk when I've been cold, unhappy, tired and bored, only to return to my cozy little house with more energy and lifted spirits.

## Kindness

I know that some people are having a particularly tough time. If you can, why not check in with neighbours to see how they're doing? A kind word can improve people's moods.

Our readers continue to amaze us with financial gifts. We haven't asked for donations, but people have been surprising us with contributions. We are humbled, appreciative and plan to continue developing the kind of magazine content you want.

## Last Pandemic Winter?

Let's also hope that this first winter of our pandemic is the last. Yet we're being told that until we have adequate therapeutic medicines, effective vaccines and/or swift and accurate testing and contact tracing, COVID-19 will continue to be a threat, likely through 2021.

While we must follow all developing scientific recommendations, some practices should continue. Staying home when you're sick should be obvious. Wearing a mask in public when you have a cough or cold seems a good idea. Instead of shaking hands with everyone, I like old-fashioned bowing to each other.

Clasping your hands together in front of your chest while doing this, is heartwarming.

Instead of waiting for things to go back to the way they were, let's improve them. Let's be better prepared for the next plagues that strike. Let's improve elder care. Let's end homelessness. Let's tackle climate change before it devastates us all.

With wildfires that have been burning in the west of the continent, hurricanes and floods destroying the south, and under-reported but devastating losses in the Arctic, will it soon be our turn to experience an extreme climate challenge here at home? One concern I've learned from home gardeners this year, is what a poor harvest there was. With an infestation of gypsy moths, I myself had no apples growing on my defoliated trees, although they have grown new leaves. Unseasonable cold followed swiftly by extreme heat led to poor yields. There were fewer pollinators working to produce fruits. Tomatoes took a very long time to ripen on the vine; many people resorted to picking them when green and hoping they would turn red indoors. Harmful insects, temperature swings, lack of pollinators and drought are some difficulties that could increase in future. Could food scarcity become a problem?

We may not yet know how, but it's possible that this pandemic is related to climate change. If people's crops are failing in other parts of the world, they have to turn to other sources of food. Viruses are crossing from animal

species to humans, perhaps through inhumane treatment and the consumption of wild animals. Could this be another way that climate change is harming us?

## In This Issue

Keeping climate change in check is the subject of Bob Barnett's column in this issue. His "View of Land Conservation" in this issue is a timely wake-up call for us all.

We also offer content that is pure enjoyment. Our cover story takes us on a winter kayak trip north of the Escarpment in Georgian Bay near Collingwood. Author Albert Bedward shares plenty of tips for how to survive this chilly adventure.

Jennifer Howard does a lot of volunteer work for Procyon Wildlife Centre, and is just as dedicated to photographing wildlife at large. She shares some of her breathtaking winter captures with us.

David Kendall is an author with a long-standing, profound commitment to the Niagara Escarpment where he lives. His thriller novel *Slag* includes a chapter set in the Cheltenham Badlands, which you can read in this issue. He will donate a portion of the proceeds of the book to protection of the Escarpment.

Snuggle up and enjoy some good winter reading and viewing in this Winter issue.



## Let us know what you think!

Write us at [editor@NEViews.ca](mailto:editor@NEViews.ca) or *Niagara Escarpment Views*, 50 Ann St., Georgetown ON L7G 2V2.



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*Gloria*

Gloria Hildebrandt

*P.S. Wild animals need wild spaces.*