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FREE The voice of business in Eastern Ontario

Vol No. 1 Issue No. 3 **Business News** APRIL 2020

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New businesses lining up for revised downtown spaces!



Building a new business: Ashley Davies of Johnstown is renovating the old Young's of Prescott and the building attached to the west. Plans are in place to bring in several new businesses. JOURNAL PHOTO/BURCHELL

BY VERONICA BURCHELL

PRESCOTT - A new industrialized business boutique is generating a lot of interest in Prescott's downtown. Prospective shop owners are already contacting the current owner to reserve spaces.

The two conjoined buildings at 124 and 112 King Street West are under renovations to house the new mews-style operation. Owner Ashley Davies of Johnstown started initial construction and changes mid-March.

Glitz Spa was already in business at 124 King Street and was set to add a dental hygienist. Other professionals expressed interest in joining in and Davies got the idea of a boutique industry on the site. 112 King

Street was until recently the home of Young's of Prescott.

"I changed my plan when these businesses came to me about adding more services," Davies says. "Now I plan to use the space to offer sites for several small businesses," says Davies, an electrician by trade. "There are also ten apartments on the upper floors to renovate and rent." He is carrying out most of the work himself at this stage.

The changes are planned in two stages. The first half of the ground floor renovation is planned for the former Young's store and includes partitioning off space for several businesses. When that's complete, Glitz will move over to that spot and their current shop at 124 will come under con-

struction. That part of the process is on track right now to be completed by June.

The proposed name of the entire boutique setting will be "Glitz Industrialized Business Boutique". All the business applicants so far are women, and Davies is impressed with the entrepreneurial spirit they have shown him. He believes their plans are sound and will offer something brand new and original to Prescott's downtown business section.

While the ground level work progresses, Davies will simultaneously continue the rehab of the upper apartments, which he has already started. Those ten spaces were in "decent shape", he says, and he is currently working on the

drywall upstairs.

The entire project, including a new street-friendly storefront on the eastern half, is expected to take two years, barring any delays. Davies has given up his full-time employment to concentrate on this project.

There is also tear-down and new construction to be done at the back of both buildings to allow for more parking spaces. Under municipal bylaws, there must be adequate parking for both the businesses and the apartments.

"It's a big project, but very worthwhile," says Davies. "Prescott needs this and the business owners have expressed a real interest in locating here. It's a win-win for downtown and residents alike."

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Grenville Federation demonstrates generosity once again

By TOM VAN DUSEN

ROEBUCK –As usual, the big beneficiary of the annual Grenville Federation of Agriculture meeting and banquet was the county food bank system.

Marking 22 years as President of GFA, Adrian Wynands presented cheques totaling \$21,000 to representatives of the South Grenville Food Bank, Knights of Columbus Kemptville Food Bank, and Merrickville Food Cupboard. The money is raised through volunteer planting, harvesting and the sale of crops by federation members.

The amount provided to food banks fluctuates from year to year, depending on weather and crop prices, Wynands explained during the full-house event at Roebuck Community Hall

last month. Also benefiting from GFA generosity were county 4-H clubs with \$1,800, and Agricultural Awareness with \$1,600.

Presentation of cheques was only one item on a busy agenda which also included guest speaker Cathy Lennon, General Manager of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, musical entertainment and teasing banter from Stephen Goodberry and his wife Debra Lynn Currier, presentation of the 20th-annual Award of Merit to Dawn and John Wynands (Adrian's younger brother), and a fundraising auction with legendary Smiths Falls fast-talker John Joynt taking the bids; more than \$1,500 was raised.

Also on the agenda were approval of the 2019

minutes and treasurer's report prepared by Carol Wynands (Adrian's wife), who has been in the job for 12 years, and elections which acclaimed Adrian and the board of directors for another year.

Just as popular as any of the agenda items were the rib-sticking turkey and ham dinner served with every possible trimming and the irresistible dessert table, which for many guests is a big draw. Marlene Neddo and staff started working on the meal three days before the event, preparing for 180 guests 100 pounds of potatoes, 15 pounds of beans, five turkeys, two 25-pound hams, and 20 pies and cakes. All that and seconds too!

Personable and an engaging speaker, OFA manager for the past six months Lennon has been

touring county chapters to introduce herself and present her agricultural credentials. Although she's from a long line of farmers, Lennon is the only family member today involved in any aspect of Ontario farm life. She told the Roebuck crowd she wished it was otherwise.

Reminding guests of OFA's lobbying efforts with the provincial government on several issues, Lennon said her vision of the federation was reflected in the Roebuck hall with entire farm families coming together to break bread and celebrate their lives in agriculture. She appreciated the "energy and enthusiasm" of the voices gathered together.

Regional OFA director Jacquie Pemberton, who farms in Dundas Coun-

ty, asked participants to consider volunteering to help out at the Ottawa Valley Farm Show March 19 chaperoning visiting politicians around the

EY Centre and helping to persuade them on some of the pressing agricultural issues including rural infrastructure and trespass protection.

Award of Merit winners live up to the honour

By TOM VAN DUSEN

ROEBUCK – The latest recipients of the Grenville Federation of Agriculture annual Award of Merit are known as model farmers who regularly give back to the agricultural community. Cardinal-based couple John and Dawn Wynands were honoured during the GFA annual meeting and banquet held at Roebuck last month.

They were introduced by Paul Henderson, himself an Award of Merit winner, and presented with an original painting of their stone farmhouse by President Ad-

rian Wynands, John's big brother and another Award of Merit winner. The award winners modestly thanked friends and neighbours for the recognition. As Dawn said later: "It's easy to volunteer in Grenville. We're a small county but very active and we all get along."

Henderson observed how John and Dawn have transformed the old family farm into a modern dairy operation putting 240 cows through a 30-stall rotary milk parlour in what has become a destination for domestic and international agricultural tours. Last

summer, Ontario Agriculture Minister Ernie Hardeman joined MPP and fellow cabinet minister Steve Clark for a red tape reduction meeting in the Wynands barn where such issues as the regulatory burden, shortage of skilled labour, and loss of abattoirs got an airing.

John is a regional director with Dairy Farmers of Ontario and a past elected delegate with the Gay Lea Foods cooperative as well as a past board member with CanWest Dairy Herd Improvement Association. Dawn has been active with the

county milk committee and has been an organizer for 25 years with the annual Farm Comes to Town event at the Drummond Building in Spencerville where Grade 4 students from across the county get an education in various aspects of farming.

Holstein Canada Master Breeder shield winners John and Dawn are helped on the farm by their two older sons, while two daughters and a niece who lives with them remain involved in other areas of agriculture. "It's a rare thing when all the kids stay in the business," Dawn noted.

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Pancake house closed but maple trees still in business

By VERONICA BURCHELL

SPENCERVILLE - It is said that time and tide waits for no man. Apparently, neither does the sap of maple trees.

Breakfasts are suspended at Hunter's Maple Products and Pancake House, but present owner John Hunter and his family are still collecting, boiling and bottling. Normally at this time of year they are open every weekend to sell breakfast to the public. But during the current COVID-19 atmosphere of closures, this seventh-generation family business has had to make some tough choices.

"We managed to get three weeks in of having our pancake house open" says current owner John Hunter. "But we had to do the responsible thing and close it off."

Hunter did not get official notice that he had to close until after the fact. When he heard about closures of similar services on

the radio he decided to play it safe and follow suit. Last Tuesday he did receive a call from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Health Unit asking if they were closed; this was three days after he made it official himself.

"But we are still in production," he adds. "I'm here with my family collecting and producing, just the way we've done it for all these years. Product is still for sale for anyone who wants to make a trip out. I'm letting one or two people in at a time and others are still welcome to walk through the sugar bush if they want to."

Normally the pancake house is open from the end of February to the end of April and would see 6,000-7,000 visitors in that time. In the first three weekends of this season, they put through about 1,000 before they closed the kitchen and dining room.

Making syrup from sap takes a number of steps,

and the right weather conditions play a role too. This year happens to be a good year - Mother Nature is doing her part - and Hunter's was on track to have a successful season. With the purchase of a new boiler just this year, John had even cut production time down.

In previous years it took four-and-a-half hours to produce two-and-a-half gallons. The ratio is roughly 40:1 - 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup. Hunter's quality has always been over the government approved standard and remains so.

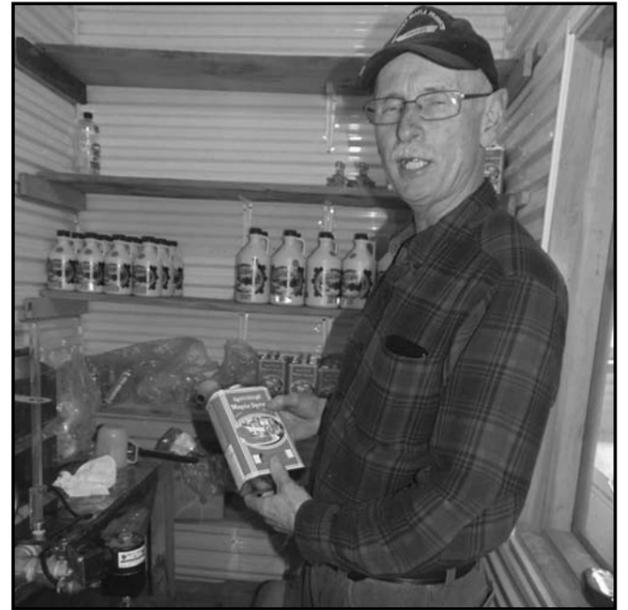
The syrup farm started when Hunter's great-great-grandfather Andrew and wife Janet emigrated here in 1821 with their seven children. They bought 100 acres east of Spencerville on what today is County Road 21. Since that time, some members of each generation have worked in the syrup business.

Now, Hunter's children and grandchildren help

out either in the kitchen, the dining room or in the actual making of the syrup and other products such as maple butter, maple fudge, and maple sugar candy. There is always collecting and processing to do and syrup is bottled in several sizes and types of containers, including glass, plastic, and metal cans.

Hunter's also supplies syrup for a boutique shop in Toronto which specializes in home-made products from around the province. They also take orders for 50 or 60 ml specialty containers for weddings and other events.

Whether the serving end of the business will reopen this year is still to be decided. If the closures carry on too far into April, there will be no time for Hunter to return to offering breakfast. With farm acreage to plant and other seasonal necessities coming up, he just isn't sure if the family will be able to reopen the kitchen.



Maple syrup still plentiful: John Hunter of Hunter's Maple Products shows how the sap becomes syrup at his sugar bush on Highway 21 near Spencerville. His pancake breakfasts are cancelled but bottling of the amber syrup goes on. JOURNAL PHOTO/ BURCHELL

"We've been here for seven generations and probably three or four more," says Hunter. "This will be a setback for us but we will get through it - this is a product made here and made well and you can trust it because you know where it comes from. I know our people will eventually be back and we'll be here whenever that happens." he says.

Business CALENDAR

All business events in local communities are temporarily suspended due to COVID-19

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BUSINESS NEWS EDITORIAL

Self-isolation diary...

Day one:

It's Sunday. Knowing we are going into a work-from-home situation, Donna and I make the trip to town for our necessities of the groceries, gas and prescriptions needed to keep our household as healthy as we can. I drop in the office to update my portion of the process on route to printing a paper. It is a quiet place to be.

Later in the afternoon, the thermometer in our little homemade greenhouse (without a heat source) is nearing 30 degrees in the bright sun. It feels like spring...makes one forget that the country is slowly shutting down.

Day two:

My first official work from home day.

While I work from home often, it is great to be at home at the same time as my spouse is. I commit myself to visiting her desk as often as possible.

As I communicate with the graphics team, who are not as able to work remotely because the design equipment is specific to our office, I feel twinges of guilt (or maybe pride) that make me doubt the decision to hole up at home. After a brief inner dialogue, I remind myself that the right thing to do is not always the easiest thing to do. I think a lot of Canadians are finding this out...as they struggle with not doing what they normally do. It would be so simple to just fire up the truck and head to town. One little visit can't hurt.

Right?

Wrong.

Stay the hell home. As much as we think we are, we are not smarter than the government and the medical community. Please...just stay home.

By mid-morning, I am finding out that Donna is considerably less than eager about company visiting her at her desk while she is working than I am.

Outside it is overcast. The greenhouse temperature, now not much above freezing, reminds me that spring (like this pandemic) is barely getting started.

Day three

The ground is covered with snow as I head back into the office.

Isolation is replaced with social distancing as my second family and I tap away at keyboards, print mock pages and practice our weekly rituals in an effort to make sure that the newspaper continues to reach the community.

And then it is back home...isolated, hopeful and waiting for the sun to rise on another day.

joe

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This cartoon was submitted by local resident Frank Taker.

A time of opportunity

The world has changed in the last week. The schools are closed, possibly for the year, non-essential services are preparing for a temporary shutdown, and we are all living life at a (physical) distance.

The most dramatic and terrifying change that we have witnessed in the last week is the infection tally climb ever steadily upwards. Over 1,000 Canadians have now tested positive for COVID-19. These people could just as easily be our family, friends, coworkers, and neighbours. This worldwide event has shot straight to the hearts and minds of all Canadians. We are all afraid, uncertain, and overwhelmed with the gravity of what is and what might be yet to come.

As I sat in my newly set up home office Monday morning, surrounded by my three newest colleagues (a Chihuahua, a Jack Russell, and an Olde English Bulldog cross), working free of usual distractions and at a rate of speed and efficiency double that of which I usually manage, it occurred to me that we all have unending opportunities in front of us throughout this pandemic.

In the past week, I have seen countless examples of people right here in our community taking advantage of these opportunities.



PUBLISHER'S
PEN

Kate
Martelle

I have seen people seize the opportunity to empty grocery store shelves and hoard for themselves. Yet, I have also seen people hosting events online to fundraise for the food bank, and I have seen people show up in these scary times to donate of what they have or volunteer at that food bank as well. I have seen people offer to pick up essential items and groceries for the elderly and those in self-isolation.

I have seen people taking advantage of our local hospital by stealing hand sanitizer. On the flip side, I have seen a local distillery change operation and start pumping out hand sanitizer (raising funds for the aforementioned food bank by doing it).

I have seen people taking the opportunity to feel sorry for themselves. I have seen people complaining of boredom. I have also seen communities come together to take part in socially-distanced fun and activities. I have watched employees, employers, and families come together to make our new normal work to keep us all afloat.

As we all live in a state of limbo, the opportunities will be endless. One thing is certain however - we will always have more opportunities. Which will you seize?

See you soon, South Grenville,
Kate

Under pressure?

I count myself as pretty lucky. So far no one I know has gotten sick. My fiancée, our dogs, and I have food and essentials (and by essentials I obviously mean toilet paper).

We didn't panic. We don't have vast stores of things in the house, but we have enough to get by for a couple of weeks. I would say we handled the pressure of the current crisis reasonably well.

Pressure is a funny thing. In the absence of sports, I've taken to watching sports documentaries. It's been eye-opening to see the individuals and personalities behind the names and statistics. It has made me dislike the Australian team a lot less (I'm British - we do not like Australian sports teams!).

What fascinated me most was how much of their training dealt with how to cope with 'pressure'. By the time a sportsman reaches the heights of international competition, the skills are usually in place. A little fine-tuning here and there, but generally they are good at what they do.

No one prepares them for the pressure of expectation. It comes from their fans, their teammates, and themselves. So often I've

seen elite athletes make schoolboy errors at critical moments. All due to the pressure of those moments.

It's not just sports people who face pressure. Everyone does almost every day. How we deal with it from person to person varies massively. One person will buy what they need from a store; another will buy what they think they will need for weeks and weeks because they are worried the stores will run out.

I've seen so many stories of panic-buying - always reported negatively. What has gotten lost is a person behind that story.

That person was reacting to pressure in the best way they were able to.

It would be interesting to hear from these people as to why they 'dropped the ball' in this way; why they reacted how they did. I'm a pretty firm believer in the idea that there are very few genuinely bad people in the world. Maybe that's naïve of me, but I think that pressure changes people. Some are calm, other not so much, but they all, in that moment, we all think we are doing the best we can, and that's all any of us can do.

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Local distillery standing up for frontline workers

By VERONICA BURCHELL

JOHNSTOWN - King's Lock Distillery near Prescott has changed their production priority to making protective hand sanitizer for first responders.

Owner Laura Bradley says the current need far outweighs what they can keep up with. On March 20, they received emails from the involved government agencies asking if they could, or would, take on making this essential product. Since they are a family-run company, a meeting was held with all involved and the answer was a fast and resounding 'yes'.

But when word of what they were doing got out to the public, people started arriving in droves with bottles, cans and containers. Bradley and her son Nathan Heuval says they felt "terrible for turning them away". They have had to lock the doors in order to carry on with business.

"Our first responsibility must be to the first responders and other health-care workers," says Bradley. "These are the people dealing

with the sick; we have six fire halls alone just in this area. And many, many homecare workers, ambulance drivers, and nursing homes."

"We've had doctors and hospitals calling from Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal."

Heuval is visibly upset about the situation. He says he had to deny local residents, and it hurt him to do so. But people were actually emptying out water bottles in the distillery's parking lot, thinking they could come in and fill them up with hand sanitizer. Everyone had a reason why they should get priority preference.

"It was animalistic," he says, adding that he has seen little good from people during this crisis. He is especially upset by the newscasts of people still gathering in parks, beaches and house parties.

What does make him and the rest of his family feel better is the fact that can help in their own way with the crisis at hand. That help is two-fold; first supplying the product, and secondly, ensuring that any money earned above their actual cost

goes to the South Grenville Food Bank.

The recipe is simple - high-proof alcohol blended with glycerol and distilled through the proper equipment. They currently have corn fermenting to provide the alcohol. 8,000 litres of corn will make 600 litres of hand sanitizer.

The blending takes a couple of hours per batch, but filling the bottles is a lengthy process. Especially now, when the proper bottles are in short supply. They had to order more from outside Canada, but that shipment will take a week or more to arrive.

Bradley and husband also have outside jobs which they are managing to keep up with at this point. There is also the other side of the distillery business to keep afloat. But even with the stress of all these demands, the Bradley group will keep producing sanitizer as long as they are physically able.

"If the people who are supposed to protect us - if they can't sanitize themselves - where are we going to be at?" she asks.



Staff at King's Lock Distillery in Johnstown are working hard to ensure the safety of first responders. The local family-owned operation has switched to manufacturing hand sanitizer amid the shortage brought on by Coronavirus. Facebook photo

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How to apply for EI and COVID-19 emergency benefits

Emergency benefits to be made available in April for those who don't qualify for EI

Workers and businesses hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible for part of the \$82 billion aid package announced Wednesday by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, which includes \$27 billion in direct support for those struggling to find work or care for family members.

The package, now before Parliament, stands to adjust the rules on who qualifies for Employment Insurance (EI), and includes two emergency benefits for those who don't.

The emergency benefits aren't yet available, but the government has released guidelines on who can apply, and how much relief Canadians can expect. Here's how they'll work.

Who qualifies for EI?

Whether you qualify for EI will still depend on your specific situation, such as regional rate of employment, and the

number of hours worked in the last 52 weeks. The government recommends people apply as soon as possible to find out if they qualify; waiting more than four weeks after your last day of work means you could lose access to those benefits.

To receive regular EI, you must have lost your job through no fault of your own, including layoffs. EI sickness benefits include being unable to work because of illness or quarantine. Under Wednesday's changes, the one-week waiting period for sickness benefits will be removed for those who have been told to self-isolate or quarantine, meaning applicants can be paid for the first week of their claim.

If approved, the maximum amount paid out for EI is \$573 a week.

How do I apply?

Applicants usually need a medical certificate along with records of employment, though the new rules allow quarantined workers to apply without the former. If you

can't apply because you are quarantined, you can also file for EI sickness benefits later and have the claim backdated.

To apply for EI benefits, you can visit the website. Afterwards, you can apply to have the one-week waiting period waived by calling the government's toll-free number at 1-833-381-2725, or teletypewriter at 1-800-529-3742.

It is also possible to apply in person at a Service Canada office, though those who are experiencing symptoms, or are in self-isolation or quarantine are instructed not to visit.

What if I don't qualify for EI?

The federal aid package also includes the Emergency Care Benefit and the Emergency Support Benefit.

The Emergency Care Benefit provides up to \$900 every two weeks for up to 15 weeks, to those affected by COVID-19. It's intended for those who don't qualify for EI, can't

go to work and don't have paid sick leave.

Workers — including the self-employed — who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 can apply, as can those staying home to take care of a family member with COVID-19 who doesn't qualify. Parents staying

home to care for children because of school closures are also covered, and can apply whether or not they qualify for EI.

The Emergency Support Benefit will give up to \$5 billion to workers ineligible for EI who face unemployment. It is intended to be a long-term

income support, but the government hasn't yet said how much it will provide, or how long funds will be given out.

Both benefit plans will be available to apply for in April, through the CRA website, and a toll-free number that has not yet been shared.

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Bluegrass returns to South Grenville this summer

By CONAN DE VRIES

When someone says 'bluegrass,' you might think of Georgia, or Tennessee or the Appalachian Mountains, but you wouldn't be wrong to think of Spencerville, too.

It has been seven years since the debut of the South Grenville Bluegrass Festival, which is held annually at the Spencerville Fairgrounds, and in short order, the event has become a destination for discerning bluegrass fans from both near and far.

When the idea of creating the festival first occurred to founder Kim Wallace – himself an accomplished musician with the well-known local band County Road 44 – he probably didn't expect that his fledgling event would so quickly grow to occupy such a prominent place on the summer touring schedule for both fans and musicians, but many people now have the dates of the South Grenville Bluegrass Festival circled on their calendar.

This year, though, those dates have changed. The festival has typically taken place on the third weekend of August, but this summer will be held from August 6-9.

As always, the festival will feature some high-end headliners from the United States along with some of the best Canadian bluegrass musicians and several of this region's most popular bands. Anyone who knows anything about bluegrass will have heard of Ohio's Larry Efav and the Bluegrass Mountaineers, and this summer, anyone who wants to hear the best in bluegrass can take in his appearance at the Spencerville Fairgrounds.

Efav will be followed by two other of the most illustrious names in bluegrass, the Edgar Loudermilk Band from Georgia and California's Eddie Leblanc and Friends. The weekend will also feature

appearances by Acoustical Strings, Concession 23, Bill White and White Pine, the Blue River Band, Grass Under Fire and, of course, County Road 44.

The reputation the festival has now established in the bluegrass world enables organizers to attract some big names, both American and Canadian, but some of those very same bands were there from the beginning, agreeing to play for the upstart festival and its passionate organizer for no other reason than to see his ambitious project flourish.

"I didn't even know if I could afford to pay them," says Wallace, remembering the early days of the festival.

Fortunately, the bluegrass community – both fans and musicians – is as generous as it is passionate, and many of the bands were only too pleased to lend support to what they no doubt hoped would become a new and exciting venue for their favourite brand of music.

"Every one of them came with the intention of playing for free," remembers Wallace.

That first weekend, however, was indeed new and exciting, and it drew enough people that Wallace could at least give that first lineup something for their pockets. It wasn't until its third year that the festival was able to bring in an American headliner, and only one at first. The next year there were two and there have been three acts from south of the border for each of the last two years, including two appearances by renowned bluegrass musician Carson Peters, who was playing with Ricky Skaggs at the Grand Ole Opry by the age of nine, and whom Wallace hopes to bring back next year.

It's a testament to how much the festival has grown in stature that its lineup has expanded so much, and along with the number of bands, the size of the audience has

also increased. In that first year, there were 65 RVs parked at the Spencerville Fairgrounds, but in 2019, there were 270 RVs and more than 500 walk-in spectators.

It's possible the crowds will be even larger this year, since the change in date means the South Grenville Bluegrass Festival will no longer take place opposite the Havelock Country Jamboree, which may have drawn off some fans that might otherwise have come to Spencerville.

Bluegrass music may have its roots 70 years ago in the southern United States, where pioneers like Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys ushered in a new musical tradition, but it's a big draw in modern-day Ontario, too. There are quite a few stops on the bluegrass festival circuit in both this province and neighbouring Upstate New York, so fans of bluegrass willing to travel will have no difficulty filling their summer calendar.

"That's all they do is go from one festival to another all summer," says Wallace.

Before he had his own festival to organize, Wallace did much the same, and has attended many bluegrass festivals at venues large and small and seen first-hand the size and passion of the bluegrass fanbase, both south and north of the border, including a large event just a short drive away in LaFargeville in New York state.

"There were more Ontario cars there than ones from the US," he says.

The organizers of the different festivals try to accommodate one another and not book the same acts as other nearby festivals, which gives audiences reason to take in as many events as possible.

"You're not going to go to every festival and see the same people," says Wallace.

One of the first festivals of the season in this region is actually the Galop Canal Bluegrass Festival, held in

Iroquois, and the lineup for that weekend will be quite different from the one that will appear in Spencerville. It's not just the music, though, that keeps fans coming back to the festivals year after year. It's also the people. Everybody is so friendly and welcoming, to both regulars and newcomers, festivals are as much social events as musical ones.

"It's a huge family gathering, you might say," says Wallace. "It's a whole new world."

Wallace knows a thing or two about bluegrass music festivals; he's been to quite a few as both fan and performer, and one thing he points out is that the events are always very easygoing and the people who attend sensible and considerate. There is none of the overindulgence or excess that might scare some people away from the festival scene.

There is, however, a lot of music--not only on stage but also among the fans, particularly those who stay the weekend in the RV park. There can be as many as 15-20 jam sessions every day--and night.

"They might play until the sun comes up," says Wallace.

Bluegrass certainly lends itself to impromptu jam sessions. That's probably how the tradition began in the first place, and the more musicians, the better. Bluegrass is generally all acoustic and started out as a unique combination of many different musical influences, both European and American, modern and age-old, all intermingled in a way that laid the foundations for a brand new and enduring musical tradition firmly rooted in the musical melting pot of the American south in the early to mid part of the 20th century.

"It's a lot like your old classic country. That's where it took off from," says Wallace. "It's as close as you're going to get to the old country and western style of music."

As much as the fans of bluegrass stick together, so too do the musicians, and it was through the many contacts he has collected as the founder of the South Grenville Bluegrass Festival that Wallace and his band were invited to a music festival of a different sort. Several months ago, County Road 44 joined a who's who of the bluegrass scene on the annual Bluegrass Cruise, where they played and listened to a lot of music over the course of an 8-day trip through the Caribbean.

"We had a great time," says Wallace.

The band has already accepted an invitation to climb aboard the same cruise later this year, but not before County Road 44 entertains audiences right here in Spencerville. Not only will visitors to the South Grenville Bluegrass Festival will not only be treated to a fantastic lineup of musicians and a unique family atmosphere, but there will also be some great food vendors there, and visitors can enjoy a home-cooked breakfast every morning. Shower and bathroom facilities will also be provided, and all the music takes place on stage inside the horse barn behind the Drummond Building, so weather will not interfere with the performance schedule.

At the end of every festival, visitors are asked to fill out feedback cards that give organizers not only some idea where everybody comes from -- and that's everywhere from the American Midwest to Prescott -- but also what people think of the event. The reviews are always stellar and the complaints minor, with many respondents, many seasoned festival-goers, saying the South Grenville Blue Grass Festival is the best they've ever been to.

It takes a lot of people, though, and a lot of organization to make sure the reviews continue to be so complimentary.

"It takes a lot of volun-

teers to make the festival work," says Wallace.

Not just volunteers, but sponsors too. The festival is an expensive production, and sponsors make the whole thing possible.

"We really need our sponsors and they've been so good to us," says Wallace.

The bands and musicians also continue to be good to the festival. The American bands are paid in US dollars, and the exchange rate can hit the festival's account rather hard.

"A lot of the bands know that, and they'll work with us," says Wallace.

The South Grenville Bluegrass Festival has also been well-served by the Ottawa Valley Bluegrass Music Association, a group of over 200 members that has been around for more than 30 years and of which Wallace is a director. Every festival since the first one, in fact, has been organized under the auspices of the Association, which has lent its considerable support to ensuring the festival continues to thrive.

The Association also receives a small portion of the revenues generated by the festival, which is essentially a non-profit event, since all the rest of the money is reinvested in making the festival even better.

"Whatever we do make stays in the bank, and we use it for the next year's festival," says Wallace.

Tickets for this year's event will be available online at southgrenvillebluegrassfestival.ca or by calling 613-883-3126 or by emailing southgrenvillebluegrass@gmail.com. A weekend admission will cost \$70 if purchased beforehand or \$80 at the gate and includes rough camping. Children under 16 are admitted free when accompanied by an adult. Gates open on Tuesday, August 4 and early camping will cost \$10 per day. Day passes are also available.

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Country store practices common sense approach to Coronavirus

By Veronica Burchell

NORTH AUGUSTA - They say it takes a village to raise a child; it may also take a tightly-knit group of rural residents to raise a sense of peace in a chaotic world.

Grenham's General Store in North Augusta is using a calm, common sense approach to the recent bad news circulating the globe. No long lines or rationing here - just getting on with the business of doing business in troubled times.

"Yes, we have seen some downturn in business, but we are here and we are open," says Lisa Grenham, a life-long resident of Augusta Township. "We are a close community and people have been great - I understand folks going into the city to stock up, especially seniors - but most of our people have been supportive".

Calling the store "pretty much a one-man show", she has seen a harder time getting supplies. Bread is a commodity missing from the shelves right now - calls to their usual supplier have gone unanswered for three days. Ditto for cheese. They usually deal with St. Albert's near the Quebec/Ontario border, but at least they took her call.

"They are short on delivery people," she explains. "As soon as they solve that I'm sure we will have stock again."

Meanwhile they still have plenty of essentials: potatoes, gasoline, milk and cold cuts. People were stopping by last Thursday to fill up vehicles and pick up lunch. No sandwiches, but french fries and a cold drink went a long way toward appeasement.

And yes, they do have toilet paper.

"Folks out here didn't wipe out our stock," says her spouse Jason Philips, smiling at his own pun. They bought what they needed and thought about others' needs too."

The enterprising couple bought the store five years ago - it was known far and wide as Finucan's General Store for about 60 years before that - and they have definitely put their own,



Community spirit at work: Lisa Grenham stands behind the counter with her partner Jason Philips backing her up. The couple intend to stay the course and keep their North Augusta store open throughout the COVID-19 crisis. JOURNAL PHOTO/BURCHELL

unique brand on it.

As one of just a few surviving country stores, you can still buy rubber boots and bird seed just an aisle away from canned vegetables and laundry soap. The arrival of a shiny pizza oven two years ago resulted in a new influx of business. It's the kind of place where people stop after making a Saturday dump run to grab a sandwich and a bag of milk and catch up on the news.

But lately, the news has not been so good. The people who do come in are apt to stay a little longer and talk a little more. Usually a hub of local news, this little store now sees shoppers discussing global issues like government economic stabilization and scientific breakthroughs in microbiology.

Grenham and Philips are quick to say they don't think rural residents are any less anxious about weathering the storm of COVID-19

- they just believe that people outside of big cities and towns are more used to living within their means and dealing with what life throws at them.

With no employment insurance to fall back on and the fact they can't afford to self-isolate and close the store, the couple says they probably wouldn't anyway. They believe life in a rural area is all about coping with adversity as an everyday occurrence.

"Think about farmers - they've always had to work around weather, illness, taxation and other pressures," says Grenham. "Maybe out here we are just a little

more responsible for ourselves and aware of our neighbours and their troubles.

"Out here everyone

is a friend or relative; we are here for them and will stay open - we don't forget about our neighbours just because

of hard times. If anything, we band together even more to make sure everybody is safe and looked after."

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With the support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Leeds Grenville Economic Development launches webpage for businesses in face of COVID-19 impact

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development Office has launched a webpage www.investleedsgrenville.com/covid19 to provide businesses with resources, surveys and programs that become available to support them during this difficult time with the impact of Covid-19.

Information has already been posted from BDC, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) and FedDev Ontario. Businesses are encouraged to subscribe to the webpage to ensure they receive updates as they are posted.

Also businesses are asked to ensure their contact information is up-to-date in the Counties business directory www.investleedsgrenville.com/directory.

Economic Development staff is available via phone – 613-342-3840 or email econdev@uclg.on.ca should you have any questions.

Prescott small business community rising to recent challenges

By VERONICA BURCHELL

Pet food, people food, and a ride to get it all are still available to residents of Prescott.

During the recent closures of some businesses and downsizing of others, most local retailers are figuring out ways to change and adapt with the times. Many have seen a decrease in revenue but are finding innovative ways to make it up.

"I've actually seen some parts of town I've never been in before," says Bob Watson of Bobby's Restaurant on King Street East. After closing their dining room 16 days ago, Watson instituted a delivery service for his patrons old and new.

The idea of delivery was something he had never explored before, but he says it is going well. People call in to order and he leaves it on their front step or porch. Almost everyone is using credit card numbers to pay, or telephone banking. In cases where some

elderly clients aren't set up to do that, they are leaving money out for him in an envelope.

He is down to a skeleton staff after having to lay off most of his servers, but says he and partner Melissa - known to regular patrons as Missy - and one front counter person can handle it for now.

Pizza tops the list of take-out and delivery orders, but a lot of burgers, poutines, and wraps are being shuttled around town as well. He says he and his pared-down crew will be open as long as they can.

The virus closures are a double hit for Watson. His establishment had recently re-opened after a long hiatus due to remodeling and repair.

Across town at Pet Valu, things inside look about the same, except for the addition of bright red lines on the floor to indicate where to stop when you come in. Staff are at the door to ensure only two shoppers are in the store at a time. Pets

are still welcome to come in with their owners. The treats usually handed out are still available, but staff doesn't hand them directly to pets: they put them out on in a small space and Fido can help himself. And that spot is sanitized after each snack is eaten.

At Jim's Taxi there are only two drivers on duty, but the business is still open 24/7 at this point. There is no dispatcher on site and calls are being routed right to the drivers.

"We are still afloat and running," said one driver last week. "People still have places they have to go like for groceries and doctor's offices, so we will be here for those who need us."

Prescott Smoke Shop has seen a slight downturn of business and has shortened their hours, but are still seeing lots of shoppers coming in for necessities. In an interesting turnaround, they have actually doubled their usual egg order, now selling two cases a week as opposed to the previous



Familiar faces standing up for downtown businesses: a reduced staff at Bobby's Restaurant on King Street have pledged to stay open for delivery and takeout during the COVID-19 pandemic. This sentiment is becoming common among downtown Prescott businesses. From left are Karen Smalley, Marilyn Greer, Melissa Hutt and restaurant owner Bob Watson. JOURNAL PHOTO/BURCHELL

single case.

"Eggs are nutritious and inexpensive, so it kind of makes sense," says one clerk. "And let's face it - hens aren't going to stop laying, and the eggs we sell are processed in very clean, bio-secure plants."

The smoke shop is limit-

ing the number of customers to two at a time as well, and have a hand-sanitizer station right inside the door. They have also noticed a new kind of respect from customers - people aren't handling things and putting them back on the shelves. Shoppers appear

to be taking more time to look at items and only touching what they intend to purchase.

"This is a good town and most people are getting the message," she says. That sentiment was echoed throughout the small business community.

Ontario protecting consumers from price gouging

Offenders face fines of up to \$500,000 for charging unfair prices on necessary goods

TORONTO — Premier Doug Ford has announced new penalties to combat price gouging and hold offenders accountable for raising prices significantly on the necessary goods Ontarians need to protect themselves and their families from COVID-19.

Effective immediately, the government has issued an emergency order that retail businesses and individuals in Ontario cannot charge unfair prices for necessary goods.

Individual offenders can face a ticket of \$750, or, if summoned to court and convicted, could face a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and one year in jail. If convicted, a company director or officer could face a fine of up to \$500,000 and up to a year in jail, and a corporation could face a fine of up to \$10 million.

"Starting today, we are taking serious steps to ensure our frontline workers, our families and our most vulnerable citizens have what they need to stay safe," said Premier Doug Ford. "We are putting an end to those trying to profit

off of one of the darkest periods in our province's history. If you're engaging in price gouging on necessary goods, we are going to slap you with a ticket or you could face fines or jail time."

Necessary goods include:

- Masks and gloves used as personal protective equipment in to infections.

- Non-prescription medications for the treatment of the symptoms of the coronavirus.

- Disinfecting agents intended for cleaning and disinfecting objects or humans.

- Personal hygiene products, including soap products and paper products.

"As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve provincially and globally, we are seeing a shortage of necessary goods available to the public, such as hand sanitizers and household cleaners," said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Government and Consumer Services. "We will not tolerate those taking

advantage of these difficult times to charge unfair and unreasonable prices. It is not right and our government is taking swift and decisive action to put an end to it with extremely stiff penalties."

Consumers can report an individual who is price gouging by filing a complaint at 1-800-889-9768 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, or by filing a report online.

Quick facts

- The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act establishes the province's legal framework for managing emergencies.

- The order will be in effect for the duration of the declared provincial emergency.

- Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA), the order prohibits persons, including retailers, from selling necessary goods for unconscionable prices. "Unconscionable prices" would be defined as a price that grossly exceeds the price at which similar goods are readily available to like consumers, which is

consistent with well-established principles from the Consumer Protection Act.

- Violating the order can result in a ticket in the amount of \$750, or a charge under the EMCPA, with the possibility of a court imposed fine of up to \$100,000 and up to a year imprisonment for an individual. A director or officer of a corporation could

face a fine of not more than \$500,000 and a term of imprisonment of not more than one year. In the case of a corporation, a fine of not more than \$10,000,000 may be imposed.

- Businesses and organizations who can supply emergency products and innovative solutions to support the government's response to COVID-19 can

visit Ontario.ca/OntarioTogether.

- The government is currently consulting on other ways to improve consumer protections in Ontario. Those interested can take part in a survey at the following link: Share your feedback to help us improve the rules under Ontario's Consumer Protection Act.

Food Bank is open for service

The South Grenville Food Bank (SGFB) is committed to serving their clients and ensuring the health and safety of the public and our team of volunteers. Currently our hours remain the same (keep watching our website for changes).

PRESCOTT - 136 Henry Street: Tuesday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

CARDINAL - Car-

dinal Public Library, 618 King's Hwy #2: Wednesday 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

SPENCERVILLE - Spencerville United Church, 16 Centre Street: second and fourth Thursday 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the SG Food Bank has the following recommendations:

1. Wash hands often

with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer

2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just washed your hands

3. Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue or into your arm, not your hand

During the time when the schools are closed we will be providing children with addition food packs.

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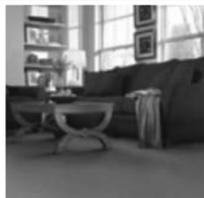
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Ontario's action plan 2020: responding to COVID-19

Additional health care resources and support for people, jobs and employees included in \$17-billion response, says Clark.

BROCKVILLE — The first phase of Ontario's response to COVID-19 includes an unprecedented \$17-billion in additional resources for our health-care system and direct support for people and jobs, says Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes MPP Steve Clark.

"From the start of this crisis, I have said we are living through extraordinary times that will require an extraordinary response from government to support families, individuals, businesses and the heroes working on the frontlines of our health-care system," said Clark. "Today is the first step in our government's extraordinary response. We'll get through this crisis together and I'm proud we're acting today to help make life easier for the people I represent, while giving the health-care system the resources they need."

Ontario's Action Plan 2020: Responding to COVID-19 was unveiled today by Finance Minister, the Hon. Rod Phillips.

It includes \$7 billion in additional resources for the health-care system and direct support for people and jobs. The Action Plan also makes available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flow, protecting jobs and household budgets.

"People should be focused on their health during a global pandemic," said Clark. "I have been incredibly moved by the Ontario Spirit that the residents of our community have shown to each other in response to this crisis. The message our government is sending today is that we have their backs and that the health and well-being of Ontarians, along with helping protect their financial security, is our top priority."

Clark said the \$17 billion response is a critical first step to ensure Ontario's health-care system, communities and economy are positioned to weather the challenges ahead. The plan includes a dedicated \$1 billion COVID-19 contingency fund, as part of the additional health care investments, as well as an unprecedented \$2.5 billion reserve and an increased contingency fund of \$1.3 billion to provide continued flexibility to respond to changing global circumstances.

The plan includes \$3.3 billion in additional health care resources to protect the health and well-being of the people of Ontario, including:

Committing to a dedicated \$1.0 billion COVID-19 contingency fund for emerging needs related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Investing \$935 million for the hospital sector,

including \$594 million to accelerate progress on the government's commitment to address capacity issues, as well as \$341 million for an additional 1,000 acute care beds and 500 critical care assessment centres.

Increasing public health funding by \$160 million to support COVID-19 monitoring, surveillance, and laboratory and home testing, while also investing in virtual care and Telehealth Ontario.

Investing \$243 million for surge capacity in the long-term care sector, as well as funding for 24/7 screening, more staffing to support infection control, and supplies and equipment to help tackle the COVID-19 outbreak.

Investing \$75 million to supply personal protective equipment and critical medical supplies to front-line staff to tackle COVID-19.

As part of the action plan, the Province also announced \$3.7 billion to directly and urgently support people and to protect jobs. Key initiatives in the government's plan to strengthen its response to the COVID-19 outbreak and support people, families, workers and employers include:

Helping families pay for the extra costs associated with school and daycare closures during the COVID-19 outbreak by providing a one-time payment of \$200 per

child up to 12 years of age, and \$250 for those with special needs, including children enrolled in private schools.

Proposing to double the Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) payment for low-income seniors for six months.

Supporting more affordable electricity bills for eligible residential, farm and small business consumers, by providing approximately \$5.6 billion for electricity cost relief programs in 2020-21, which is an increase of approximately \$1.5 billion compared to the 2019 Budget plan.

Further supporting more affordable electricity bills by setting electricity prices for residential, farm and small business time-of-use customers at the lowest rate, known as the off-peak price, 24 hours a day for 45 days to support ratepayers in their increased daytime electricity usage as they respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, addressing concerns about time-of-use metering.

Cutting taxes by \$355 million for about 57,000 employers through a proposed temporary increase to the Employer Health Tax (EHT) exemption.

Providing \$9 million in direct support to families for their energy bills by expanding eligibility for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) and ensur-

ing that their electricity and natural gas services are not disconnected for nonpayment during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Providing emergency child care options to support parents working on the front lines, such as health care workers, police officers, firefighters and correctional officers.

Expanding access to the emergency assistance program administered by Ontario Works to provide financial support to people facing economic hardship and help more people meet basic needs such as food and rent during this public health emergency.

Enhancing funding by \$148 million for charitable and non-profit social services organizations such as food banks, homeless shelters, churches and emergency services to improve their ability to respond to COVID-19, by providing funding directly to Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Service Administration Boards who would allocate this funding based on local needs.

Providing six months of Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) loan and interest accrual relief for students, leaving more money in people's pockets.

Helping to support regions lagging in employment growth with a proposed new Corporate

Income Tax Credit, the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit.

Providing additional supports of \$26 million to Indigenous peoples and communities, including emergency assistance for urban Indigenous people in financial need, and costs for health care professionals and critical supplies to reach remote First Nations.

The government's plan also includes measures that will make available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flows over the coming months, including:

Making available \$6 billion by providing five months of interest and penalty relief for businesses to file and make payments for the majority of provincially administered taxes.

Over \$1.8 billion by deferring the upcoming June 30 quarterly municipal remittance of education property tax to school boards by 90 days, which will provide municipalities the flexibility to, in turn, provide property tax deferrals to residents and businesses, while ensuring school boards continue to receive their funding.

Making available \$1.9 billion by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) allowing employers to defer payments for up to six months.

Certain sales up in town hardware store

CARDINAL - With more people staying home, paint and other home-improvement products are actually enjoying a surge in sales.

Burchell's Home Hardware in Cardinal is in the same empty boat as other stores when it comes to gloves, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies. But they have found paint sales to be up by a small

margin.

"Thousands of workers are now at home trying to stay busy," says Kevin Burchell, who operates the store with his wife Lisa, his family, and a small staff. "The upside of being at home is having the time to spend on your house."

The store is also a social hub in the village. They care about their

customers and know 90 percent of them by name. Burchell says people have always stopped by to talk but now those conversations are 15 minutes instead of the usual five. And the content is decidedly different.

Everyone who comes in still discusses the weather, but now there is always a question or two about the current virus situation.

And when people enquire of the Burchells, "how are you?", it is asked more sincerely rather than as an opening statement.

This is one Home Hardware where they haven't yet had to limit the number of people in the store at one time. Customers are doing that themselves.

"Most people are getting the message and using common sense.

They are limiting themselves by looking around to see how many are in here" he says. Last Thursday people were observed waiting outside until other patrons finished and left.

"And they are keeping their distance from each other without being told to," he adds.

He credits these acts of responsibility to the recent barrage of newscasts

and the inherent sense of rural residents. This hardware family vows to stay informed and up-to-date, taking things one day at a time - the one concession they have made is a new Sunday closure.

Other than that one day of the week, they will continue to serve their "family" of customers as long as needed.

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Ovens still warm at busy village pantry

By VERONICA BURCHELL

SPENCERVILLE - A long-time favorite stop in the village is still open for business. Owner Carol Kirkby says she will keep serving the public as long as she's allowed.

"Right now we've seen a small downturn in, but not too bad," says Kirkby, who has operated The Village Pantry for over 20 years. "A little less busy than usual but not as bad as it could - or might soon - be."

Kirkby says she has not cut any staff hours but is closing one hour earlier in the evening. This is a move she considered all winter but has finally put into practice.

Her biggest concessions to current times includes making more space between customers and asking people to wait before approaching the front counter. Her staff has a reputation for having a smile and friendly greeting for every customer, and this has only increased.

The other famous thing about this general store-plus-takeout restaurant hasn't changed

either. Those enormous, home-made, frosted cinnamon buns are still going out the door with almost every customer. Featured once on CJOH's Regional Contact program, this popular confection is considered the local symbol of The Village Pantry. If you've got one in your hand, everyone immediately knows where you've been shopping.

"Yes, we still have them and we will have them every day," says Kirkby, laughing. "They have become the thing we are really known for out here."

Other takeout items include pizza and sandwiches, and the shop does a brisk trade in both. Although her breakfast customers are a little sparse now with not as many people heading in for coffee, there are still lots of take-out orders coming in.

"People rely on us to be here and we intend to be, for as long as we can," she says. "Unless the government starts shutting down this kind of small business, I intend to be here and be open."



Cinnamon buns still a hot sell: Even with fewer people out on the streets in Spencerville, this kitchen is still busy turning out a local favourite. From left are Linda Mellon, Carol Kirkby and Kailee Byers on duty at The Village Pantry. JOURNAL PHOTO/BURCHELL

Leeds and Grenville

LEGAL SIDE BAR

Content provided by Clinton H. Culic of Fitzpatrick & Culic.

Know Your Limits – Common Limitation Period Pitfalls

Since January 1, 2004 Ontario has had a new limitation period regime. Most people know this and are aware that the general 6-year limitation period is now 2 years. But there are some that are much shorter.

Actions against a municipality for highway property

First off, nearly ALL sidewalks in towns and cities are considered part of highway property. So this category covers slips and falls on sidewalks, and it is the shortest (that is how Municipalities keep their insurance costs manageable). You must give notice to the municipality within 10 days of the event and then commence your action within 2 years. The 10 days is the shortest and most commonly missed limitation period in Ontario. Even worse it is usually missed by the most impacted and least well off of victims, the elderly.

Defamation – actions against a publisher for libel

This is for written defamation, not spoken (which is slander). You must give notice to the publisher within 6 weeks of finding out about the defamation then commence your action within 3 months.

Estate Trustees and Administrators

Actions by or against an estate must be commenced within 2 years of the death of the deceased. Discovery of the claim has no effect on extending this fixed limitation period.

Dependent's Relief Claims

No action for relief by a dependent of the deceased who was not provided for by the deceased can be made after 6 months from the granting of a probate or an administration.

Fire insurance

No claim can be made against an insurer of fire loss after 1 year from the date of the fire.

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