

HERITAGE ON THE HILL

Newsletter of the Richmond Hill Historical Society



May - August 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by *Jim Vollmershausen*

Well, here I am writing my first President's Message for our regular Newsletter, and given everything that's going on (or not going on), it isn't exactly what I had envisioned.

It is truly a strange and troubling time we are living in right now – an historic period in our country and community. I hope you are all healthy and safe – staying home as much as you can, practicing social distancing and wearing a mask when you do venture out, and lots of handwashing and sanitizing of surfaces you or others might touch. Being in isolation can be trying and disturbing. Missing normal social contact with friends and neighbors or more importantly with family – our parents, our children or grandchildren – can be a mental wrench in our lives.

But we are traditionally good at coping. Many of us are discovering some new value in social media, and, of course, phone contact with friends and relatives – even ones you may not be in contact with all that often – has become very important. Shopping only when we have to, obeying lots of new rules in shops and supermarkets in order to maintain that 6 foot separation, and learning how to have a good conversation from at least 6 feet away has all become somewhat normal.

These are also trying times for organizations like ours. We have not been able to get together – no executive meetings, and certainly no regular monthly meetings. We missed March and April, and will also have to cancel our May meetings. Our June Strawberry Social? Sadly we will have to forgo that as well. So we are missing a chance to gather together, to get caught up on each

other's lives, to hear from some good speakers and generally to get our normal value out of our Historical Society. We missed the annual Maple Syrup Festival and Cultural Summit in March, and will miss Doors Open in May – all events that normally give us important opportunities to come in contact with many people in our community and give them a bit of a glimpse into what we do and why we do it.

The extraordinary nature of this situation caused one of our members, Barbara DiMambro, to wonder about how to record this experience. In the true spirit of historical thinking, Barbara proposed that the Society undertake a project to set up some kind of record of our individual efforts to cope with the hardships associated with battling the COVID-19 pandemic. We discussed a few options, and ultimately, to avoid privacy and copyright issues, settled on the simple notion of having members briefly describe their various coping mechanisms which we would then share over a couple of our newsletters. You will even find a few of these short submissions in this issue. We may also devote some time

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