

Perrysburg Persevering Pandemic

By Richard Baranowski

I mentioned in a piece two weeks ago about Perrysburg history repeating itself on the subject of epidemics. Although The COVID 19 pandemic repeats local history, it is making new local history as well. I have been keeping a journal of observations and/or events as it relates to Perrysburg experience.

As I write this (April 4), Governor Mike DeWine yesterday announced that quarantine rules that began March 16 will be continued until May 1. Schools, churches, non-essential businesses remain closed. He reminded folks of the six-foot social distancing rule when they are out for necessities. He also asked that the stores manage the amount of people inside at given times to avoid unnecessary crowding.

Here in Perrysburg things have slowed down. Streets have little traffic. I don't think Sandusky Street, which I live on has not been this quiet since the Blizzard of 1978.

There's nothing that takes the community pulse better than a visit to Kazmaier's Market. A recent stop there showed a fairly busy parking lot. Inside though it was quiet, almost tense atmosphere, not the usual gabfest it becomes among both customers and employees. People kept their distance as much as they could. Some of the clerks wore masks, as did some customers. Everybody's scared, but as one person said to a cashier, "Thank you for being open." I think the whole community would agree.

Even though the local restaurants are take-out only, many have 'Help Wanted' signs, a paradox indeed. Stella's, Casa Barron, and Zingo's all were advertising. Allen Kazmaier told me that he is able to keep his grocery shelves pretty much stocked. "My only shortage is help," he said. Churchill's and Gastown, both essential businesses also need workers.

Although considered essential businesses, some local restaurants have given up the ghost for the time being, such as American Table, Waffle House and several of the Chinese establishments.

At Maddie and Bella's Coffee Shop in uptown Perrysburg, service was available, but orders were brought outside where customers waited. Perrysburgers, another uptown eatery had a sign explaining similar policy.

At the Perrysburg Messenger, normal business is being conducted, although the office is closed to the public.

The playgrounds at the local parks have been closed, although people are allowed to exercise and there's plenty of that going on. Woodland Park has been especially busy in recent days as the weather is getting milder.

Signs were evident as well at Municipal Park closing the playground. The kids were also having pick-up basketball games on the court, but I haven't seen them lately and I think they may have been chased out.

The quarantine has excluded fisherman here for the walleye run. Orleans Park had perhaps 50 cars in its parking lot one-day last week. The fishermen (and boats) however, seem to be spread out at safe distances out on the Maumee. Since the courts are closed except for serious cases, grapevine has it that

there are no game wardens this year to police the run. Then again, we have more than a few snags to be worried about these days.

Grapevine also has it that not every minor traffic law violator is being pulled over as well. But area law enforcement has reported that crime in general has been quite low these past few weeks.

Besides first responders, other visible businesses working are the landscape people and construction. For example, there was a company mulching areas uptown Perrysburg the other day. Area road construction, the new Amazon warehouse and the Perrysburg Boat Club all had crews about.

Although the schools and the library is closed, online business is making up for it. Teachers are teaching from home and learners learning from home. The library is conducting online story hours and other programming. And the catalog has an array of materials that can be downloaded.

The library also has applications for absentee ballots on its front door for people to pick up if need be. They should be sent to the Board of Elections who will then send you your bona fide ballot. Voters have until April 27 to mail them back to the Board of Elections.

This Friday afternoon as I write this is quite pleasant weather. It is 60 degrees and blue skies. Many people are out exercising, walking themselves or their dogs, jogging, skate-boarding, bicycling or baby-buggy-ing. Perrysburg has done well so far, but can the governor keep people in as weather gets better? And its 27 days until May 1.

When you read about the 1918 flu epidemic in Perrysburg, the village was shut down off and on for three months although granted they were not best weather months, October, November and December, which may have made it easier. We are starting our 4th week and going into spring. And reading about the down time and living it are somewhat different experiences.