



Sound Outlook Series Part 1: Together we get through this

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Pandemic. Outbreak. Coronavirus. COVID-19. No matter what word you use to describe the past two months, they all spell the same thing: struggle. We've all struggled in our own way.

Some of us have struggled economically having lost business, employees, and the feeling of financial security. Some of us have struggled physically, having lost access to the gym, trails, and parks, yearning for more time away from the couch. But most have struggled socially. Owen Sound is an

incredibly social community, home to a vibrant culture of collaboration beautifully accented by cuisine, music, theatre, art, sport, and natural beauty. During this time of literal isolation, perhaps we've struggled socially the most; but there's a great silver lining to this temporary reality.

You've likely seen the online meme about us all enduring the same storm but in different boats. That's not just true of individuals, but of communities as well. No city has experienced this thing the same. Not every town is in the same boat. But regardless of the community you have been isolating yourself in, it is the people around you that have helped to get through this.

It might have been something small, like a Facetime with someone we've lost touch with, or a note left in the mailbox from a loved one. A wave from that person we'd normally walk by without saying 'hi' to. It's Zoom gatherings with friends. It's homemade beer and fresh bread left at the doorstep by a family member; and it's seeing a profound level of appreciation in the faces of grocery store workers when they're thanked by shoppers for doing what they're doing. At the end of all those instances, it's a quick smile that makes all the difference. That's the new currency of this community.

Yeah, when it comes down to it, what we need right now is community. And it's clear – this community we have here in Owen Sound is pretty amazing. It reminds us how lucky we are to be in this boat during this particular storm. When word hit that this Coronavirus was the real deal and headed our way, one of the first local reactions online was the creation of a *Caremongering* group, something native to Canada. This was a group that's sole existence was to help the most vulnerable in need, and this area adopted the idea quickly and ran with it.

There is a famous Ghandi quote that says "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." By this measurement, I'd say we're flourishing. That might not be a word many would use to describe our current state of affairs, but it's a clear sign that we're going to take care of each other through this no matter how long it takes. It means we'll learn to ignore our differences more and embrace the things that bring us together. It means connecting with our kids and our friends in more meaningful ways and letting people know they're not in this thing alone. It means using creativity to overcome boredom and solitude. It means we're not going to let this virus defeat us. But that's not to say there won't be struggle.



Face-to-face gatherings turned to Facetime in early 2020

What do you do when an area poised to begin its tourist season has no certainty what that will look like? How do you plan for a summer that has no Summerfolk, or Salmon Spectacular to look forward to?



Harbourfest 2019 - John Fearnall

We may not be the tourist centre we usually are this summer, but 2020 has also presented us with an opportunity. Every disaster does. With so much taken from us as of late, we should also acknowledge what we've been given: we have an incredible opportunity to re-evaluate and re-define what makes us great as a community. We have a shot to heal relationships that have fallen by the wayside. We have a chance to look inward to better appreciate the things we have, the people who make us happy, and the good health that sustains us. We have a chance to answer old questions and ask new ones.

Over the next six weeks in this Summer Outlook Series, we'll be addressing some of these questions and answers, and providing our insight into how this community is moving forward. We'll highlight some of the great things happening around Owen Sound with current Covid measures in place.

Let's never lose sight of the fact that one day in the not-so-distant-future we're going to emerge from this chapter. We'll witness people who haven't seen each other in months embrace in the streets, cry tears of joy, shake hands, hug, play, and catch up. Some things will be different, but the community feeling will still be there. It's not something that can be erased because it resides within each of us. We all make up this community collectively, and we're all supporting each other in our own ways. We can see that. We know you can see it too.

Hang in there, OS. Together, we get through this.

Sound Outlook is a six part series written by the local lifestyle enthusiasts at Rrampt. Sound Outlook will provide a look at how COVID-19 has affected Owen Sound through a cultural lens. We know this isn't the 'Summer Guide' you've been accustomed to, but hey, nothing is customary these days.

Part 2 of the Sound Outlook Series is coming next week.