



March 17, 2020

Hello,

It's apparent that we are living in very strange and different times. The world is shutting down around us with theatres and public places going dark, Memorial prohibiting unnecessary meetings of more than 25 people, taking courses online, and public health officials urging social distancing sooner rather than later in order to delay and “flatten” the spread of the Covid-19 virus so that over-taxed medical systems can cope.

In keeping with directives to date and those very likely to follow in the next few days, we are suspending meetings of both our focus and special interest groups and programming. Activities will resume when we receive word that it is safe to do so. We are doing so not only because our members – for the most part, 65 and over – are among those most vulnerable to the virus, but also because it is in a broader public interest to that we do so.

I'm sure that many, if not all, of us have the feeling that we are living in times very different than we imagined. Those of us who went through “Snowmageddon” in St. John's have already had the sense of living in a world that is somehow out of joint. That sense is likely to increase in a period of reduced social interactions and more “snow days” and time on our hands than most of us expected or wanted. Having moved house in the aftermath of “Snowmageddon” and left unpacking while resumed normal life, I realize that I will now have no excuse for not hanging the remaining pictures, straightening out cupboards, scanning years of photos, and doing long-delayed projects.

But that is easy to say and likely harder to do. Many of us will feel frustrated and isolated. That is unavoidable, but we can mitigate the pain by reaching out to others, writing to family and friends, and checking in on others who may feel even more isolated. Doing so would be, in Jewish thinking, a *mitzvah* or good deed -- in stronger terms, a blessing. It is the least that we can do in difficult times.

Steve Wolinetz
President
MUN Pensioners' Association