

THE LINDSAY ADVOCATE

KAWARTHA LAKES' FINEST MAGAZINE

WINNER - NEW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



"Cashiers and cooks and drivers are being acknowledged like we've never seen."

A people's new economic normal

Published on June 4, 2020 — in Opinion — by Mike Perry

“**A**ll of my sweat, blood and tears were in my business.” In Fenelon Falls, Sandy’s well-known bakery has closed for good.

My dear friend Graham has also shuttered his senior care family business, too overwhelmed to consider what might be next for him.

We're hearing these stories more and more. The free market is now producing 15 per cent unemployment and possible defaults on consumer debts of 50 to 70 per cent. A lot more bankruptcies and unemployment are forecast.



GUEST COLUMNIST MIKE PERRY.

Trust the system, we were told. The free market will solve all our problems, we were told. It's "common sense." Logical. Normal.

But "normal" is 45 per cent of Canadians living pay cheque to pay cheque.

Normal is houses and food produced as commodities, not based on need. Normal is a million kids going to bed hungry every night. Normal is the president of Scotiabank making more than \$13 million per year.

Indeed, normal has been the problem. We are now seeing yet again how inadequate and not "normal" our economic system is.

The market is not saving us financially here.

The market has crashed and been re-built the same. But this time, things are different.

The government — so long demonized as the problem — is offering to pay 75 per cent of private sector wages.

“There-is-no-money-governments” have found funds in record time. Rightfully so. And, perhaps most importantly, we aren’t blaming each other — or ourselves — this time for the free market’s failures.

More people are now openly questioning what’s normal in the face of so much loss and financial hardship.

This time, a consensus is emerging among people from all walks of life that we need to rethink how society works. People are saying that we want — and need — an economic model that unleashes our human potential, not for accumulation and profiteering and unlimited growth, but to express our moral values.

Also this time, it’s the workers — usually ignored and underpaid — who are coming to the rescue. Cashiers and cooks and drivers are being acknowledged like we’ve never seen.

We are being reminded again of what’s profoundly important – our value of people and community and how interconnected we all are.

We are enjoying a sense of unparalleled good will towards one another where the normal, rigid rules don’t have to apply after all.

These are indeed hard, unprecedented times.

So let’s seize this moment and transform the economy. After the Second World War, elites behind closed doors created the economy in their own image. Now it’s the people’s turn.

But there is no alternative to the free market, we’re told.

Nonsense.

Ideas and policy options abound. Just do an internet search for the doughnut model; the Green New Deal; community exchanges; cooperatives; social enterprises; and indigenous economic ways, to name but a few.

Our post-pandemic new normal must include a new economic normal. If we don’t change what’s been normal, we will just re-live the same problems.

Now is the time to create a new economy. Efforts are already underway to put the same old free market back together again, so we need to act now, with a clear vision and the courage of conviction.

Now is not just a time for out-of-the-box thinking. This time, we can make a whole new box.

But creating new boxes – especially economic ones – can be challenging. People and local businesses are both hurting and resilient.

Too many of us have experienced loss and hardship over these past few months. And

many of us have ideas and experience and success working for change and meeting challenges head on. This is hope.

We now have a clear choice: to return to the old normal problems of the free market system or raise out of these very hard times with a new economy fashioned in the people's image; one that meets the needs of all of us, absorbs shocks and is sustained by the planet.

Planning is underway for residents of Kawartha Lakes to soon have a say in what a more fair, inclusive, and green economy will look like for all of us.

Everyone will be welcome.

We are in this together. And together, we can make it happen.

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JUNE 20, 2020

City concerned about financial impact of loss of community sports

Director of Community Services Craig Shanks is keeping an eye on the ever-lengthening list of local

Photo: Sienna Frost.

JUNE 16, 2020

Home owner help on the way from City for needed repairs

Help is on the way for homeowners in need of repairs, energy efficient upgrades or accessibility

JUNE 15, 2020

Mayor encouraged by stage two reopening so far

Today Mayor Andy Letham commented favourably on the public's cooperation in following health and business protocols