

TO DO OR NOT TO DO?

In most small towns and villages, the most often asked question is ‘**What is there to do?**’ or a different variation may be ‘**There’s nothing to do**’. Now is that really true? That will always depend on who you ask of course. With life returning to normal after the covid yrs, most people are anxious to get back out there to do this or that. However, there is still a good size of the population hesitant to get ‘back into the saddle’ as the saying goes. It may take time for those holding back from venturing out and doing what they used to do, or on the other side of the coin some may not even bother anymore. Why would that be? Well, with the ease of access to streaming content and shopping online the burden of leaving the couch to go watch a hockey game or any sporting event or even to shop can be more of a chore than the thing to do anymore. Not to mention the cost of events, or instore shopping having escalated the last few years to ridiculous dollars in some cases. Why should I drive to go to a football game, pay exorbitant amounts of money for a ticket, fuel, parking and then cough up even more for a hot dog and a drink, either freeze my ass or sweat in the sweltering heat to watch a game when I could just as easily sit on my couch, with my own snacks, and in my underwear to watch the very same game?? That is where we have crossed over to. This applies to every small town event as well. The attitude of ‘*meh, why bother*’ is the most common catch phrase nowadays and that can be troublesome for these communities who rely on support to stay financially viable!

Suddenly the Monday night bingo game at the local hall is struggling to draw a crowd because, well, “I’m busy binging the latest show on Netflix” or too tired from the day to stroll down for an hour or two to help support the local group putting the event on. The night out at the local rink for the latest game begins to see fewer fans in the stands, the summer fair sees a smaller crowd because they’d rather go sit in their backyard with a cold one as opposed to coughing up a few bucks for a brew at the beer gardens. Now, what was a small problem, becomes an enormous issue. Now let’s say bingo night continues to fade with each week. At some point the local group will decide to close up shop simply because you or I couldn’t be bothered to spare one night every once in a while to help support local. What’s next? The weekly Yoga class gets cancelled, perhaps paint night fails because there was not enough participation so the odds of it ever being offered again vanishes. This would apply to pretty much everything – game night, book club, public skating, and any other offering that is put forth for the residents to offer them a chance to ‘*get out of the house*’.

This can carry over to those small businesses who are at a disadvantage to begin with – especially with online shopping virtually at the touch of your fingertips – so suddenly the local grocery store closes because, well, no one supported them. Your favorite coffee shop suddenly closes because they can’t make a go of it. Now you and I really don’t have nothing to do because there is virtually nothing left to do and let’s face it we took these events and businesses for granted thinking ‘ah they’ll always be around’. Is this the fate of all small towns? I would surely hope not because living in a small center is unique and for the most part quite peaceful.

So, ask yourself this the next time you think ‘Well there’s nothing to do’ - Honestly, is that really true?? Maybe check out that Yoga class that starts next week, or throw on your jacket and hit the rink to watch the local boys play some hockey - after all the rink is usually just down the street from you. And hey, why not try your luck at bingo? Your chances of winning some extra pocket cash are just as good as playing that million-dollar lottery or I might even say, your chances of winning that extra coin might be considerably better than that lottery ticket you just bought. Using the ‘*well there’s nothing to do*’ excuse is most often than not, just that, an excuse and we are all guilty of that at some point or another. Instead of taking these small-town opportunities for granted, let’s show our appreciation every so often and turn off the TV and venture out.