

## Keep the borders closed - please!

by SHERALYN ROMAN

It hurts me to write this. I have family in the US. I miss them terribly, and have done since the day they left for a work transfer that promised promotion and new opportunities. Since that time, we've been fortunate enough to visit them frequently and they have come home often. Now however, it's looking like we won't be seeing our family anytime soon and while nothing matters more than family ? I can't be the exception to the rule and the border to the US SIMPLY MUST STAY CLOSED. There's really no other way to help protect our country not just from the big orange menace but also from COVID-19.

Frankly, I'm not sure which is worse, the menace or the disease. Actually, I think they are intimately tied to one another. The big orange menace, in my opinion, should be held primarily liable for the state the States find themselves in. It's his policies (and refusal to wear, or promote the use of, facemasks) that are in part contributing to the hot mess the U.S. currently finds itself in. Sure there are other factors like lack of equitable access to health care, lack of testing and the forced re-opening of an economy that has no business being open but the reality is, just about every decision can be traced back to the orange menace and his obstinate, steadfast refusal to listen to anyone other than his own musings. The end result, sadly, is that our US friends find themselves faced with skyrocketing COVID-19 cases and competing news networks offering various ?versions? of why that's the case when most of the rest of the world clearly knows the truth.

Were the borders to open at anytime in the foreseeable future, there is no doubt whatsoever that we will begin to see higher rates of community transmission here at home. While we might dither a bit on this side of the border about how easily the virus spreads, and whether or not to use masks, I think our one point of agreement is that the virus DOES spread. Peel Region, still stuck in Phase 2 knows this and we have only to look at the southern US states in particular (who are reporting daily average totals of new disease in excess of 15,000 cases) as confirmation. These numbers are staggering alone and when consideration is also given to some of the known long-lasting related impacts of the Coronavirus, including persons who suffer permanent lung damage, heart damage, or have a stroke while being treated, the true impact on health and economy may never be adequately be measured.

Alarming, The New York Times also reports that The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services this week announced a directive forcing hospitals to ?bypass the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and send key virus information to a Washington database??From now on,? it states, ?the health department and not the C.D.C. will collect daily reports about patients that each hospital is treating, how many bed and ventilators are available, and other information vital to tracking the pandemic.? That this move sidesteps the vital work of the C.D.C. is frightening and smacks of the potential for political cover-up and misinformation to continue to spread about the true impact of the pandemic south of the border. There is no need for Canadians to become a corollary victim to this disaster by re-opening our borders.

As of this writing, it has been announced that borders will remain closed until at least August 21st of this year. That gives the US roughly about a month to gain some semblance of control over the pandemic. I don't know about you but I don't anticipate that happening all the while the big orange menace remains in power. I miss my family and I worry about their health and safety constantly but the border? It must remain closed. It's that simple.