

Try something new

by BRIAN LOCKHART

I was perusing around a Canadian Tire store the other day in the sporting goods and recreation departments.

It's one of my favourite stores and I'm sure a lot of people would agree it's the go-to place for many shoppers.

I asked the young woman in the fitness department if they carried a certain product.

She gave me this little grimace and said 'we probably don't have any.'

We walked over to the shelving that normally holds all these items and it was empty - totally empty.

'We've sold out,' she said.

She explained that they have been selling a lot of workout equipment - way more than usual.

'It's because of COVID,' she said. 'Everyone is staying home so everyone is working out at home.'

After selling out, the store was having difficulty replenishing the items because of supply lines. That seems to be a common occurrence for a lot of things as I've come up short a few times trying to buy different items.

With so many recreational activities either cancelled or limited by restrictions, it seems people have shifted their direction of interest to stay busy or fight off the boredom of not being able to take part in so many things.

There's an upside for some businesses and for some people they have a renewed passion for something they used to do or have recently taken up.

Garden centres have been doing a brisk business since the spring.

If you can't go to the gym to work out, you can always trim your trees or dig some holes and plant some new ones.

One garden centre owner told me he's never seen so many well cared for properties and lawns as he has this year.

With extra time on their hands, home owners have spent that time making sure their lawns and gardens are looking extra special.

I share a fence with a neighbor. It finally needed to be replaced. He bought the lumber and we split the cost.

Then he spent several days out there rebuilding. He's a handy kind of guy with enough power tools to open his own contracting company.

When I complimented him on his work and the fact that he toiled away so well, he replied he actually enjoyed it because 'It got him out of the house.'

It may also have been a good year for Lloyd Christmas and Harry Dunn to open their 'I Got Worms!' store.

The fish bait industry must be doing a brisk business. A lot of people are spending time casting their rods at local fishing holes. While many people are veteran anglers and spending more time at their favourite shoreline or in their boat, there are a lot of people

taking up the sport for the first time.

You can get outdoors and stay the mandatory six feet apart without even being aware of social distancing.

I've been in my local Tim Horton's and found myself surrounded by locals grabbing a coffee with fishing gear in tow as they plan to head to the local lake and snag some bass or perch.

Somewhere out there, there are worm pickers who are making a bundle working overtime.

If you like activities that involve a little more fitness, cycling is booming.

There are more bicyclists peddling about than ever before. Long distance riding is popular and mountain biking seems to be a good pastime for those wanting to get away from the computer and out of the house.

What could be more COVID-safe than cruising down a wooded trail?

Then there's good old fashioned walking. Hiking trails have been super busy this summer.

While the Bruce Trail route and Island Lake and other conservation areas usually enjoy a busy summer season, they are absolutely packed this year.

I quite often pass several rural parking lots with access to the Bruce Trail and there are always cars parked there even during midweek afternoons.

There's everyone from young kids to senior citizens strapping on their hiking boots and roaming along the trails.

The one thing I would imagine is missing this summer for young people is finding that summer girlfriend / boyfriend. When I was a teenager most of my summer was dedicated to meeting a girl either at summer camp or some other fair, carnival, beach, or amusement park.

I'm pretty sure that hasn't changed, but how are people going to meet this year?

If you can't enjoy your usual activities this summer, this is your chance to try something new.

As for my workout routine, until they get some new equipment in, I'll have to settle for carrying the trash bags to the curb.