

**Message from Laurie Harley, President, Shaw Guild:
Response to the COVID-19 situation.
MARCH 16, 2020**

I wanted to let you all know that the Guild Executive Committee has been tracking the rapidly changing Covid-19 environment and staying in close communication with Shaw management so we can respond quickly to planned actions. **Niagara Public Health continues to assess the risk in our community as low while encouraging us to take measures to protect our health.**

The following is an excerpt from a communication sent today by Tim Jennings, Executive Director of the Shaw Festival, to the Shaw Company.

The COVID-19 virus continues to play havoc with every aspect of Canadian and world-wide society. While the public health units at the federal, provincial and regional levels have continued (as of 2pm) to categorize the threat of the virus as LOW for most Canadians. Provincial health officials are recommending cancelling any gathering of 50 or more people to help stop the spread of COVID-19 for an indeterminate period of time.

The provincial and federal governments both made announcements today, noting that almost all cases in Ontario have come from international travellers and those directly related to those international travellers. The provincial and federal governments have not yet restricted business operations, but have urged Canadians to stay home and avoid risk as much as possible.

Ontario Schools are intending to return on April 6th, dependent on adjustment in instructions from the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Canada.

The Trudeau government noted at 1:30pm that as of Wednesday they are closing our border to non-residents and non-Canadians while asking travellers to self-isolate for 14 days. American citizens are exempt from this closure.

We stated Friday we would be following the recommendations of the federal, provincial and regional authorities and have been trying to determine the length of time needed for cancellations of public and internal events, but the information from the various health authorities has been rapidly changing.

We will, therefore, be shutting down our rehearsals as of today and winding down technical work/crew calls and all non-essential job functions here at The Shaw over the next 24 hours, through to April 6th.

We are also cancelling all performances and public activities between now and April 30.

We will be in regular contact between now and April 6 as we determine if any other actions are required. We have been working very hard to ensure we stay safe, stay solvent for our shared future and are able to live up to our obligations to all of you in the wake of these remarkable circumstances.

All our best to you.

TC and Tim

At the Guild, each and every one of us has a role to play to help slow down the spread of the virus. As a result of the Shaw announcement, Guild events scheduled through April 30 will be postponed. This includes:

- o Scene Shop visit on March 23.
- o Spring Preview Luncheon on April 6. Brenda Weafer, Activities Chair, will communicate with those who have paid.
- o New Host Orientations – March 16 & 23
- o Host/Greeter Kickoffs – April 20 & 21 (at Community Centre)
- o National Volunteer Week Reception & Prince Caspian Dress Rehearsal – April 22 (at Royal George)
- o Playing This Week distribution of Shaw materials

- Starting today, weekly information updates will be posted at shawguild.ca. These will include Guild as well as Shaw Festival communications (which can also be found at shawfest.com.)
- Host and Greeter schedules that were originally to be released in March for April performances will not be sent out. We anticipate schedules for May shifts will be communicated in mid-April.
- Gardeners will delay start of clean-up activities until further notice.

In the meantime, there are simple things we can do as individuals that will go a long way to containing the spread of the virus. Please know we respect and support any member who may choose to step away temporarily from volunteering to reduce his/her personal or family risk. We urge anyone who feels ill to stay home and not consider volunteering until you're well. If you have any questions, please send me email at president@shawguild.ca

THINGS YOU CAN DO:

1. Stay informed and follow advice of health authorities; Ontario Government website, [Public Health Ontario](http://PublicHealthOntario) 1-866-797-0000; [Niagara Region Public Health](http://NiagaraRegionPublicHealth) 1-888-505-6074.
2. Maintain social distancing: keep at least 3 feet away from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
3. Avoid handshakes or hugs; for greetings, try elbow touching or "hand to heart" gestures.
4. Stay home if you're sick.
5. [Visit this website](#) to learn what "Self-Isolation" means.
6. Travelers returning to Canada, should self-monitor for symptoms of Covid-19 (fever, cough or difficulty breathing) for 14 days; we encourage self-isolation for the same period.