

Book Keeper thriving in the midst of a pandemic

by Chris Cooke



For Susan Chamberlain, the COVID-19 pandemic has been “a lesson in gratitude”.

Chamberlain, owner of the Book Keeper says she learned how to sell a lot of books on line after the pandemic forced her to close her store at Northgate Plaza for 10 weeks and layoff most of her staff.

Chamberlain says the pandemic was both awful and a challenge but months later admits, “businesswise, a lot of good came from it”. She took a \$40,000.00 government loan with a two- year pay back that cushioned the blow of being forced to close.

She told the Rotary Club of Sarnia Bluewaterland that when she reopened in late May she began with limited hours and curbside service which later morphed into online purchases and 50 to 60 daily deliveries.

Chamberlain says she is “humbled by the support of Sarnians” who were not only buying books, but reading books while shuttered inside for days and months.

“Book selling is a very social endeavor and a joy” but admits the pandemic has forced her to adjust how she does business. “We cancelled nine events and quickly learned how to do business by phone, by email and Facebook,” says Chamberlain.

Following a slow recovery business bounced back with June and July sales ahead of last year.

“People appear happy to get out again and want to spend money”.

Chamberlain added, “What drives book sellers’ crazy is the media. It puts out the message that we are all failing. We aren’t ...we are thriving”.

