

HOW WILL THIS TIME BE REMEMBERED?

FUTURE GENERATIONS MUST BE TOLD OF THE GOOD AS WELL AS THE BAD DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WRITES TED ARNOTT



TED ARNOTT
Column

Just like we asked our grandparents, future generations will likely ask us what it was like living in 2020.

My answer might be this:

For us, 2020 started like every new year.

We had many challenges to tackle, but we were excited about what the year would bring, and as always, hopeful the best was yet to come.

Then the coronavirus began to spread around the world, and it came to us.

There was fear. The economy was shuttered, and many lost their jobs. Our hospitals prepared to be overwhelmed. Our long-term care homes were hard hit, and many older people died. Families grieved.

There was anxiety. We were told to stay home, only go out if necessary, and stay clear of other people. We couldn't even visit family and friends.

What once seemed normal was gone in a flash. Community gatherings were banned. Schools were closed, and then went on-

line. Professional sports stopped; the Olympics were postponed.

But there were roses among the thorns. There was leadership. Our municipal, provincial and federal governments stepped up and worked together. The people responded.

There was courage. Our health-care workers never wavered. Our farmers, food processors, truckers and grocery store workers kept us fed. Our police, firefighters, paramedics and other essential workers were amazing. They all risked their health to keep the rest of us safe.

There was isolation, but there was also connection. Our technology enabled us to keep in touch with loved ones, friends and colleagues.

There was caring and compassion. Neighbours looked out for neighbours. People were generous and shared what they had.

There was resilience. We were determined. The glue that binds society together held. We showed what we were made of. We were worthy of the sacrifices our ancestors had made for us. We laughed more than we cried.

There was belief that there was light at the end of the tunnel.

That we would get through it and rebuild; that life would be better again, even better than before.

That whatever we faced, we could overcome, together. And we will.

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnett can be reached at 1-800-265-2366 or ted.arnottco@pc.ola.org.

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SNAPSHOT



Tony Fortunato photo

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OUR FEELINGS ARE VALID, DON'T DISMISS THEM

OFFERING AN 'AT LEAST' REPLY TO THOSE STRUGGLING AMID PANDEMIC ISN'T THE RIGHT APPROACH, WRITES MELANIE MCGREGOR



MELANIE MCGREGOR
Column

have been. They acknowledged that they, as people, may not be the same when their regular routine returns.

What my friend's child was feeling, and what many of us may be feeling in this turned-upside-down COVID-19 world, is loss. Even if we are fortunate enough to be healthy and safe, this "new normal" is bound to mean the loss of some things we enjoyed and relied on.

We need to recognize that while this situation is affecting everyone, it is not affecting everyone in the same way. There is no one right way to feel, and if you're feeling loss, feel it. Don't let others or yourself explain it away with at

least: "At least you still have a job," "At least you're healthy," "At least it's spring," and the like. Your feelings are real no matter what else you have in your life.

We need to validate feelings of loss in ourselves and others. We can name feelings and give ourselves and others permission to feel them. Then the focus shifts to coping with, rather than rejecting the feelings.

If you are looking for support, keep in mind that the Canadian Mental Health Association Halton Region Branch is offering free call-in counselling. Call 289-291-5396 and a counsellor will call you back within 24 hours Monday to Friday.

Melanie McGregor is the communications and advancement specialist at the Canadian Mental Health Association Halton Region Branch, which provides mental health/addiction community support and education. Visit www.halton.cmha.ca for more information and follow @cmhahalton on Twitter.

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This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.

This newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981

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