

A MEMORABLE YEAR TO SAY THE LEAST

IT'S TIME TO REFLECT ON OUR PRECIOUS MOMENTS OF 2020, WRITES NADIA ALAM



DR. NADIA ALAM
Column

It's difficult to put into words how 2020 has tested, laid bare, inspired and re-defined our humanity.

The bushfires in Australia. Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gigi. Brexit. Harvey Weinstein and #MeToo. Breonna Taylor, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, George Floyd.

Murder hornets. Earthquakes and hurricanes. Locust swarms in Africa and Asia. The killing spree in Nova Scotia. Protests, marches, and riots across the world. First Nation evacuations in Ontario.

Amazon and online shopping. Jacinda Ardern. Sean Connery. Alex Trebek. Joyce Echaquan. Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Joe Biden. Kamala Harris. Prince Harry and Megan Markle. Dr. Bonnie Henry saying, "Be kind, be calm, be safe."

And that's not to mention the pandemic that caused well over a million deaths around the world, overwhelmed health-care systems and brought about an economic crisis not seen since the Great Depression.

Fear, frustration, worry, job insecurity, housing insecurity, food insecurity — all take a toll. Even our lan-

guage changed, with lockdown, social distancing, flatten the curve, social bubbles, Zoom and Teams and Google Meet becoming commonly-uttered words and phrases.

And yet even in our darkest hours, life goes on.

A baby is born. A son plays the guitar. A child's first day at school. Your daughter learns to code. You sled down a snow-covered hill. You call a grandparent for advice, and listen as they describe their remarkable life.

Your partner holds you tight. Your mom rubs coconut oil into your hair. Your dad makes breakfast for dinner. You sit in a garden you made. You find baby rabbits. A sister helps you practice for a big interview.

You pull out the games you used to play as a kid to entertain your kids. You look up into the stars one dark night.

You help a stranger. A stranger helps you. We survive together.

Whatever happens outside your door, honour those moments. Because every second of those moments is your life. And it's a life worth living well, no matter how big or small or loud or quiet.

Goodbye 2020. Hello 2021.

Nadia Alam is a Halton physician and past president of the Ontario Medical Association. Her columns also appear on www.drnadialam.com. She can be reached through her website.

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SNAPSHOT



Tony Fortunato photo

Raccoons search for food at night at a home backing onto a wooded area of Georgetown. Do you have a great local photo you'd like to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com, along with a brief description.

OH MY, WHAT A YEAR

COVID-19 HAS CAUSED A GREAT PAIN FOR MILLIONS, WRITES PETER WATSON



PETER WATSON
Column

Life will change in the years ahead.

Twelve months ago, life was progressing fairly nicely. Everything was the way it should be.

Times were good. Most people had jobs. Business was prospering. Stock mar-

ket values continued to increase. Looking back, these were the good old days.

The way 20/20 indicates normal vision acuity, it seemed to be how 2020 was shaping up. It looked all clear ahead.

Then came COVID-19. It hit fast and hard. Suddenly, world order as we knew it became extinct. The global population was fighting a highly contagious disease.

Millions were getting sick. Billions were fearful of being infected.

Prosperity for many evaporated. Established firms went out of business, staff were out of a job and others were laid off as their firms scrambled to cut costs.

The level of mental stress reached an all-time high. Stress of the disease, finances, and then, in a

time when we needed the support and comfort of social interaction, that too disappeared, or was greatly inhibited.

Then there was a glimmer of hope. Several vaccines were starting to appear. Could next year be the time when humans defeat this deadly pandemic?

Medically speaking, there are many uncertainties. Those problems, those challenges will be solved.

What is certain is the world has changed forever. Life moving forward will be different.

Work no longer is focused on a workplace. Commuting two, three or four hours a day to sit in expensive office space seems like a waste of time and money.

Peter Watson, of Watson Investments MBA, CFP, R.F.P., CIM, FCSI offers a weekly financial planning column, Dollars & Sense. He can be contacted through www.watsoninvestments.com.

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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 70 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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