

OBVIOUS PICK FOR WORD OF THE YEAR

BUT 2020 SHOULD BE DEFINED BY MORE THAN JUST THE PANDEMIC, WRITES TED ARNOTT



TED ARNOTT
Column

Each year, the Merriam-Webster dictionary selects a Word of the Year.

Unsurprisingly, the word of the year for 2020 was "pandemic."

The dictionary compilers define pandemic as "an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and typically affects a significant proportion of the population."

According to Merriam-Webster, there was a 115,806 per cent increase in searches for the definition of that word on the day the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it was no doubt a popular word, as we reflect on the year that was, 2020 was also defined by so much more.

We all know how difficult 2020 was for each of us personally — and collectively as a society — as we grappled with many new challenges and deep-rooted issues here in Canada, and around the world.

As we enter 2021, there are a few words that I am certain will define us: patience, hope, community and gratitude.

We continue to bear witness to (and every one of us is a part of) an extraordi-

nary response to COVID-19.

This year we continue to follow public health reminders by washing our hands thoroughly and frequently, staying home whenever we can, wearing a mask when we must be out, giving others at least two metres of space and listening to the advice of our trustworthy public-health officials.

Our front-line health-care workers have been tireless and courageous as the pandemic has dragged on.

Our small businesses have creatively pivoted to adapt to a constantly changing business environment.

Our long-term care homes have been particularly challenged, but have adopted new infection control procedures to protect residents.

Our teachers, education workers, parents and students have focused on making schools safe, and quickly setting up engaging on-line learning spaces.

Our mental-health professionals have given us suggestions on how to maintain a positive outlook and attitude to get through these anxious days.

Our public-health units and hospitals have started to administer safe and effective vaccines, starting with health care workers and our most vulnerable populations.

Patience, hope, community and gratitude. Words to live by in 2021.

Ted Arnett is the MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills. He can be reached at ted.arnott@pc.ola.org.

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SNAPSHOT



Peter Slykhuis photo

An opossum stops by a No. 5 Sideroad home for a New Year's drink. Do you have a great local photo you'd like to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com, along with a brief description.

INNOVATION PRESENTS WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

EMBRACING CHANGE CAN BE A PATHWAY TO SUCCESS, WRITES PETER WATSON



PETER WATSON
Column

COVID-19 has permanently changed life for millions of Canadians. Individuals are encouraged to embrace innovation as their new path forward.

The pandemic is the worst thing to hit our country since the Second World War. Individuals, families

and businesses have endured much pain. This article of optimism in no way takes away from that cruel reality.

Every year we face adversity, but 2020 contained a decade-plus of hardship and adjustments.

The world is different and that presents a significant opportunity. Last January who had heard of Zoom? Now millions of us use it regularly.

In some areas the world has advanced many times faster than if we had another normal year. The key for many is innovation.

Innovation is your friend.

Now there is an opportunity to harness your skills and hard work into a new business idea.

Suddenly your employment downgrade in the number of hours you work

provided you the opportunity to become an entrepreneur — perhaps even the necessity to become an entrepreneur.

What are your strengths? What are your interests? What are the business opportunities that you can explore?

Recently, I heard of two friends of someone I know who both had their employment hours chopped. They both developed their own sideline business and are making more money now working part-time with their own business than with their original job.

With change comes opportunity.

Capitalize on that change. Be creative in your thinking. Explore new opportunities.

Embrace innovation.

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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Web: www.mediacouncil.ca



newsroom@theifp.ca
IndependentAndFreePress
@IFP_11

WHO WE ARE

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Regional Managing Editor

Catherine O'Hara

Managing Editor

Karen Miceli

Distribution Representative

Iouliana Polar

Real Estate

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Regional Production Manager

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CONTACT US

The Independent & Free Press

280 Guelph Street, Unit 77

Georgetown, ON L7G 4B1

Phone: 905-873-0301

Classifieds: 1-800-263-6480

Fax: 905-873-0398

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