

# THANKS TO ALL WHO STEPPED UP THROUGH PANDEMIC

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS HAVE HELPED KEEP OUR COMMUNITY SAFE, WRITES RICK BONNETTE



RICK BONNETTE  
Column

It's been a long two years since we first heard of COVID-19.

No one ever signed up for governing during a pandemic that we really didn't know much about. There was no play book.

Thanks to our front-line health-care workers, Halton Region Public Health, Dr. Hamidah Meghani and her team, town and regional staff and all of you, the town was able to operate in an efficient matter.

It's too early to take the checkered flag and do a victory lap. COVID-19 is still here, so please continue to practise safe protocols and remember to be kind.

Things are starting to get back to some sort of normalcy. The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce recently held its annual Business Awards night and dinner. This is a huge event to honour our many fine businesses. Congratulations to all of the businesses and to Lindsay Petch, who received the Employee of the Year award.

Over the past two years we have offered the Al Fresco in the Hills Program (outdoor patios) to

help support the recovery of local restaurants throughout the pandemic. I encourage everyone to show support, if you can, for our community by getting out on a patio.

Speaking of support, there are new art exhibitions in the Sisnett Lobby at the Gellert Cultural Centre. Albert Gnosill: A Closer Look is featured in the upper lobby. Gnosill, a contemporary of the Group of Seven, specialized in landscape painting and this is a rare opportunity to see his work.

The exhibition is courtesy Ann and Josef Sirka who are donating proceeds from sales of the paintings to the Pomich Ukraini Fund, which provides aid to Ukrainian war orphans.

The work of several local artists is on view in the lower level of the cultural centre in the exhibition Hope/Nadiya. The show includes a variety of styles and media, and artists are donating sales proceeds to charities in support of Ukrainian relief.

Both exhibitions continue until May 1. I applaud the efforts of our local artists and collectors to raise funds for humanitarian aid in Ukraine, and hope that you will take the time to visit and support these exhibits.

*Rick Bonnette is the mayor of Halton Hills. Follow him on Twitter at @RickBonnette1 and Instagram at @rick\_bonnette1.*

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## SNAPSHOT



Ross Pezzack photo

A porcupine visits a stretch of the Bruce Trail in Georgetown. Do you have a great local photo you'd like to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com, along with a brief description.

## BUDGET AIMS TO BALANCE PRIORITIES

### CANADA FACING MANY CHALLENGES THESE DAYS, WRITES PETER WATSON



PETER WATSON  
Column

The goal of a federal budget is to outline the income and expenses, and how the government navigates between different priorities. I cannot remember a time when there have been more issues needing to be addressed.

Our country has too much debt. That problem, I believe, is well-known. Then the pandemic hit, and federal spending increased dramatically, adding to the country's debt. It was a spending strategy that was costly, but necessary.

The budget acknowledged our country's debt and announced it would attempt to return to pre-pandemic spending and declining deficits over the com-

mitment on national defence spending. Money will be directed to build up our military capabilities and provide direct assistance to Ukraine.

The minority Liberal government recently negotiated an arrangement with the NDP, with the goal to continue to govern until 2025.

Dental care is one of those negotiated spending priorities that was addressed in the budget.

The challenge is to be aware of the fiscal reality that too much overspending could greatly hinder our country for decades to come.

*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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