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The endless joys of home

by Mark Pavilons

?Home is where love resides, memories are created, friends always belong, and laughter never ends.?

?Quality of life actually begins at home ??t's in your street, around your community.?

??harles Kennedy

A survey by MoneySense magazine presented the best places to live in Canada.

King made it in the top 20 and my home of Caledon snuck in the top 50.

It's hard to quantify such things and their criteria included everything from the economy to the weather, from crime to the arts.

Many people are world travellers, but most of us are born, raised, and live within 200 kilometres of ?home.? My parents and I moved from Etobicoke to Caledon in 1972.

I have always found it strange that it takes forever to get to your destination.

And yet, on the trip home, it's much faster. The only explanation I?have is, it's good to get home.

The word is simple and we use it dozens of time each day ???home.? It sounds nice just saying it.

When our family of five get together, mayhem sometimes ensues. We play fight, laugh and scream. We do ?loud??very well.

But we also do sorry well, too. We hug. My daughters sing. My wife and I create in the kitchen. We cry at sad movies.

And we eat some great home-cooked meals together.

Our Bolton home is much like many other two-storey houses built in the last 20 years. When I?was growing up in Caledon on my parents' four-acre property, nestled behind the Bolton Golf Club, I?never thought I'd own a million-dollar home. A million back then bought you a heck of a lot more than it does today.

Like many average families today, we're asset rich, but cash poor. I jokingly tell my wife from time to time that my life insurance would pay off the mortgage but wouldn't leave her with much more. She'd either have to downsize or get a wealthy boyfriend.

It's funny how we shop around, but make life-defining decisions in a relatively short time. I recall visiting the house once or twice, and my wife had her mind made up. I?took more time planning a vacation and shopping for a car than I did buying this house.

I was quite happy in our previous, quaint townhouse. Most Virgos don't like change, and get accustomed to their surroundings.

My biggest joy is the view from our back door, in our back yard. Unlike many subdivision homes, we back onto a large, forested property, one that will never be developed. It's like looking into a National?Geographic magazine. We get some small and large visitors from time to time, along with some fine-feathered friends. My youngest daughter found an app on her phone that identifies the winged creatures.

Whether I'm at the BBQ or just relaxing, it gives me peace.

Our biggest investments ??hese million-dollar structures of stone, stucco, wood and granite ? are merely vessels. They house what's important ? loving families.

We make those important memories rolling around on the floor or hovering around the kitchen table. We share popcorn in front the TV, macramed into our comfy couch. We fall asleep on that same couch, with the dog's tail in our face.

I?was lucky growing up in rural Caledon, when times were much simpler. That's where I?plucked golf balls out of the Humber River and sold them back to golfers on the back 9. That's where I?fed bread to the hungry minnows who then nibbled my toes. That's where I?skipped stones, played with crayfish and learned to drive a tractor.?When I was older, I?joined my parents and family for poker night. I?helped my dad by cutting grass, watering the gardens and transplanting evergreens.

I?think this idyllic setting fostered an appreciation of the simple things in life and what really matters ??amily, friends, love and laughter.

While you leave behind some of those things when you move on, you never lose the potential to create more.

Being burdened by my Virgo nature, I seek comfort, not things. I?enjoy the atmosphere rather than the house itself. I've become used to the unhinged kitchen cupboard, the malfunctioning garage door opener and the dripping faucet.

I can put up with the oil spots on the driveway.

If we're fortunate to have a place to hang our hats, we know the feeling. We can sense when we're approaching our place of comfort after a long day's work. Our hearts skip a beat as head up the driveway.

I still sometimes announce my arrival, but the ?hi honey I'm home??schtick has lost its umph these days. I always preferred All in the Family to I Love Lucy.

We can put a price on our dwellings and properties, as dictated by market forces.

We can even cost out minor and major repairs, to keep the bones intact.

We can dress it up and give it curb appeal.
Ultimately, none of that really matters. What matters is once the front door opens you're hit in the face with all the comfort and joy family brings.
The way the economy and housing market is, I'll likely be blessed with my kids for some time. And I couldn't be happier!
Foster the love that abounds in your home. And spread some around the neighbourhood, if you get a chance!