

Bill Rea ? Another year in the books

This is the last of my columns that's going to be published in 2016 (?Thank God? some of you are thinking).

It was started Saturday morning, as the snow continued to fall outside, meaning we are almost certainly going to have a white Christmas.

I had just returned from the annual Shop With a Cop program at the Walmart at Mayfield and Bramalea Roads. There were at least 30 officers (including Auxiliaries) there in uniform, along with the young charges they were shopping with.

Above all else, it was a fun event, with lots of smiles all around.

Those are the types of events we're supposed to have this time of year, and I'm happy to report there have been lots of them lately.

For guys in my line of work, it's one of the busiest periods of the year. There have been days when I've seen more of Santa Claus than I have my wife. There have been a host of events like concerts, bazaars, tree lightings, etc. over the last couple of weeks. There are a few more in the appointment book, but their numbers are dwindling.

That's good, because it gives me more time to concentrate on the demands of the season, although as of this writing, they are pretty much under control (at least that's what I'm going to think until my wife straightens me out).

We've even been able to get in some holiday socializing.

We have some friends who traditionally get a gang together one Saturday night early in December and traverse an Etobicoke community singing carols. We joined them last Saturday night. I think the crowd was down a bit from previous years, and my voice is certainly not what it was when I was a younger man, but it was still fun, and it's a great way to get one into the spirit of the season. I think all my Christmas shopping is done, although an inventory is in order just to make sure.

The necessary social arrangements are well in hand, or so I've been told.

Last year, Beth and I had to host two family gatherings within 24 hours of each other. We did it, and quite successfully too. There was a certain amount of satisfaction that we actually could do it (neither of us are particularly skilled when it comes to entertaining), but it was also very tiring. This year, we're on the road a lot, so the hosting duties are in other people's courts. I have often wondered how my mother used to be able to handle Christmas Day by serving lunch to my father's side of the family, and then dinner (complete with turkey) to her relations.

That will be followed by a couple of days of down time. Beth and I are even planning to get away for brief time. We're looking forward to it.

That is actually how we are planning to see 2016 come to an end, reflecting on what has taken place over the last 12 months and looking forward to the next; hopefully, I would think.

The fact is none of us knows what the coming year has in store.

I think back at what has gone on in the year about to end.

There have been good times and lots of satisfaction. There have been lots of frustrating moments and events.

I spend a lot of my time working. There have been days I've been very pleased with what I've accomplished on the job, and there have been a lot of other times when I just don't think I measured up to what I'm capable of. Many times I have felt great exhilaration and been anxious to get one project done so I could get busy with the next one. And other times, I have felt so tired that I wondered if I could make it through the day.

I've been working on the annual year-end review (which will be appearing in the first couple of editions of the Citizen in 2017) over the last couple of weeks. I feel a little embarrassed as I notice some of the typos that I missed, but there's only a certain level of perfection that can realistically be expected of a guy like me.

I've also had feelings of regret when I realize how many columns I devoted to telling people that Donald Trump's presidential candidacy wasn't going to go very far. I like to think my writings on this matter were rather eloquent, even if I happened to be wrong. And I'm getting a little tired with the constant bellyaching over Trump getting elected. I didn't want him to be president either, but the guy won the election and he's going to be president. It's time for the rest of us to just live with it and move on.

Besides, the first days of the new administration should be a lot of fun to observe. I predict that when it comes to American politics, the next four years are going to be anything but boring.

We all will have our personal memories of 2016; with good and bad.

Both Beth and I had aunts named Ruth. We both lost those aunts in the last year.

I really thought the Leafs were going to make the playoffs last season. They didn't. I expected the Blue Jays were going to get into the post-season, and they did. Not all of my predictions are bad, you know. For what it's worth, I think the Leafs are going to get into the playoffs this year, and if any of you are dumb enough to bet your nest egg based on my prediction, you deserve what you get.

I'm not yet ready to comment on the Blue Jays' fortunes in the coming year.

There's going to be a lot of interesting stuff going on in Caledon in the coming year.

I spoke to Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca last week (the story was in last week's paper), and he told me there is going to be news about the GTA West Corridor in the ?relatively near future.?

I've been wondering exactly what that means, and so are a lot of other people. The corridor includes the possibility of a major highway, so there's naturally a lot of curiosity.

And while Peel Regional council has dealt with the matter of the Bolton Residential Expansion Study (BRES), the issue is far from dead. We're going to hear more about it in the year to come.

There will be plenty of comments about the governments headed by Justin Trudeau, Kathleen Wynne, Frank Dale and Allan Thompson, but since there are no elections planned for 2017, they really aren't going to amount to much. But they will provide guys like me something to write about.

There will be lots to write, but not next week.

The Citizen will not be publishing a paper next week (Dec. 29). But we'll be back with an issue ready for your perusal Jan. 5.

Happy holidays, and see you in '17.

