

Cranky and Reflective

by SHERALYN ROMAN

There's nothing like being temporarily bedridden to give you plenty of time to pause and reflect on your life as it swirls along around you whether or not you feel fully able to participate in it. You may find yourself spending time on regret - the 'should have' moments in your life or on renewal: the 'when I get better I will' moments. I did both of these, when I was coherent enough to do so and I resolved to be a little less like a cranky old woman and a little more focussed on the good that exists in the world. Anyone care to bet how long it has taken me to lose a little of that resolve? Yeah, not very long!

Those who know me best (my family and friends) occasionally express disappointment that I always seem to be griping about something in this column. They tell me it's because by nature, I'm actually a very committed and involved Caledon resident who has spent a great many years volunteering my time and energy to a number of different organizations. My motto is, 'try nice first,' and I truly believe that if each one of us does something, however small, together our potential cumulative impact is great. You never know which small act will have some kind of long-lasting positive impact on the world around us. I think this is why my friends and family wonder why I come across here as grumpy sometimes and yet, after a pause and some reflection it makes sense to me. I get cranky because if so many kind-hearted people can do small, good things in this world, why is it so difficult for others not to?

A case in point was the recent issue of a missing signature on a traffic ticket resulting in a case thrown out of court. In response to a public outcry and petition and letters, the only thing our local MPP offered was to refer the matter to the Solicitor General. Not even a token apology from the person who was formerly the Solicitor General in charge of police? Even worse, the signature response on the email from her office included the tagline 'Working For You!' Is it too much to ask that an actual human being takes the time to draft an email and is thoughtful enough to personalize it and to remove wording 'standard' or otherwise, that is clearly offensive under the circumstances? The only thing the OPP has offered is a review of procedures. I'm not sure if any other public official even responded to the public outcry. Other than fear of litigation, is there any reason at all why no one has even apologized to the family?

I might be a little extra bitter this week because what has me temporarily bedridden was a horrific case of food poisoning that landed me in hospital for days. Most of that time didn't allow for self-reflection and when it did, I tried to be understanding. But when one realizes they were in fact dangerously ill and then finds out it seems up to one third of participants were also taken ill to varying degrees, it begs the question why is no one talking about this? Why is no one asking how it came to be that a room full of women over 300 of them resulted in about one third of that number getting sick? Is it because it was a room full of women? Somehow, I feel like if that many men fell ill all at once, a full-scale police investigation might have been launched! I'm sure I'm starting to sound like a conspiracy theorist now and actually, at least Public Health is investigating so I guess I'll just have to be a patient patient.

Speaking of health care though, I can honestly say that the care and attention I received at 'Hotel Headwaters,' was exemplary. From the paramedics, the ER doctor and nurses to the inpatient care, almost everyone was kind, attentive, caring and I know the appropriate tests were completed and treatments received. Meanwhile, from my room I still heard my fair share of others complaining, berating staff and in one case outright belligerent behaviour requiring a call to security. Why? Our health care workers have been doing what they do best under the added strain of extreme conditions these past three years; it costs you nothing to be polite, even if you have a concern. Oh, and by the way, I've heard of anti-vaxxers and anti-maskers but refusing to even take a COVID test so you could be admitted to get the care you need? What is that about?

Finally, I also learned recently that I had been misinformed when it comes to how Council allocates expense budgets and how the costs of our local council members to attend events and galas is covered. I have mostly only ever praised Council and the work that these fellow citizens of ours willingly put their hand up to do, knowing it will draw the ire of someone, somewhere, no matter how hard they work. To be clear, I also firmly believe a documented expense account, of some kind is completely appropriate. But it is particularly frustrating to find that some of the folks doing that job have, unintentionally or otherwise, misled me in the past. They

say there's a sucker born every day and I feel a bit like that sucker right now. I always, always choose to believe the best of people first and foremost; sometimes even after they've proven to me they don't deserve it, because I also believe in second chances. But to be made a fool of just feels bad and I felt bad enough already this week! Oh - and also to be clear - that undocumented expense accounts exist is ridiculous, in my opinion. I'll stop now. Hopefully next week I'll be happier, and healthier too!