

## Day 29 and counting

by SHERALYN ROMAN

After almost 30 days in self-isolation I think it's only natural to feel just a tad ?down in the dumps.? Separated from loved ones, perhaps unable to work, the inevitable impact on finances and continued dire predictions about just how long it will take to recover from this pandemic are a few of the reasons one might be entirely justified in feeling verklempt. Add to that the pressures of attempting to home-school, grocery shopping in a hazmat suit, working from home and enduring consistently lousy weather and it's no surprise we're climbing the walls. Perhaps you've turned to wine for comfort or have run, screaming like a banshee to your car - not to drive away mind you, but rather, simply to sit in it for some much needed alone time! I may or may not be describing my personal experiences.

Sure all the websites tell us to focus on the positive and not get caught up in the bad news. My column last week, called ?Reflections,? may have said something similar. That was a week ago. A week in isolation is a LONG time. A week in isolation with five people is even longer! But I digress. Here's a positive. With all of this ?extra? time I've had a chance to do some reading. Sure it's usually between midnight and 2am since I can't sleep anyway but as an avid reader, uninterrupted, quality down time spent with a good book even if in the ?wee? hours, is a sure fire means of escape. Caledon Public Library and our local bookstore, Forster's Book Garden, have made such a pastime easy. Catching up on Netflix and sharing movie favourites with the next generation have also filled the time. (Note to readers: Thelma and Louise stands the test of time, You've Got Mail now just feels creepy and like Tom Hanks is actually stalking Meg Ryan.) My other job is considered an essential service so I'm able to escape the house a couple of times a week but it involves working with my spouse so??.?escape? is a relative term. I know I have it better than many. My income is reduced but I still have an income. I'm bored, frustrated and fed up but I'm alive. My family are healthy and we are doing all the right things to stay that way. I am incredibly grateful and I know good health is all that really matters. But on Day 29 I can't help but also think about what frustrates me:

? Reading about the number of folks who continue to disregard all social distancing measures and not only ignore them but blatantly refuse to think the rules even apply to them. STOP making grocery shopping a family affair! Stop gathering in parks. Just. Stop. Gathering. Period.

? Hearing from folks who complain or pass judgement on others without knowing all the circumstances. Yes, keyboard warriors, I'm talking to you.

? Watching numerous cars pull-up in front of homes disgorging visitors this past weekend. If we see a CoVid19 spike in two weeks time I'll be holding each of personally you responsible. (Now who's the keyboard warrior?)

? Receiving so many ?well-meaning? recommendations for how to fill my time productively including: learning a new language, starting a new fitness routine, or practising mindfulness (unless that's referring to my already overtaxed brain in which case I'm scoring an A+) to becoming the next Barefoot Contessa complete with raising, killing and plucking my own organic chickens (but not before they've laid a bunch of organic eggs for me!)

Frankly ? most days I'm pretty proud of myself if I can shower, get a bit of work done, prop up the mental and physical wellbeing of myself and various family members and maybe sneak in a quick socially acceptable distancing ?visit? with my Mum. By the way, bringing her fresh fruit or something my daughter just baked is way higher on my list of priorities than learning how to speak Yiddish thank you very much! I'm also pretty darn tired of being made to feel guilty that with all this ?spare? time on my hands I have to accomplish anything at all. The reality is, some people will thrive in dire times, while others will merely survive. I think either option should be considered acceptable!

What I am NOT tired of reading about is the good folks who are taking this pandemic seriously and who are doing amazing things to promote and support community:

? Caledon, you really stepped up when CCS needed help and you continue to do so.

? Our young people are setting an example on how to stay positive and on how to do something constructive with their time by supporting our front line workers. So are several local companies.

? Everyone who continues to work day in and day out at essential services so that the rest of us can buy food, get gas if we need it, obtain our regular prescriptions and oh yes, receive treatment in a hospital if we do contract CoVid 19!

? The folks at Caledon Meals on Wheels who have started a new service offering shopping for seniors, providing much needed staples at both low cost and with free delivery!

? Our Mayor and Council who continue to collaborate and work hard, virtually, to ensure the safety of all and who host ?Town Hall? meetings where residents can call in and have their questions answered by the Mayor and even Dr. Lawrence Loh.

The truth is, after hearing Doug Ford's announcement that he will seek another 28 day extension to the current state of emergency, and reading the results of a recent poll suggesting more than 45% of us don't expect life to return to normal for at least six months, I guess I'm just feeling a little overwhelmed. The overall impact of this pandemic isn't just about obvious loss such as losing a beloved family member, your job or your home. It's about a fractured economy that will remain so for some time. It's about people who may struggle, barely make it through this crisis and later (when emergency help is no longer available) face untold consequences. It's also about the potential impact on the many organizations that are currently supporting families through this crisis. Non-profits, already dependant on government funding and the goodwill of the community, will no doubt continue to suffer through the remainder of 2020 when any of their regular fundraising events will, of necessity, be cancelled or downsized.

Today ? it all just seems like a lot to deal with. I know tomorrow will be a better day and I know too that this pandemic has presented an opportunity for each of us to reconsider, and reprioritize, what truly matters most in life. With that said, it is Day 29 and counting, and there's at least 28 more days to go. If you need me, I'll be in my car, in the driveway, silently screaming and possibly with wine. Don't worry I'll leave the keys in the house.

\*I guess the moral of the story is don't write an article while you're experiencing the blues. Wait a couple of days for this too shall pass?..