

## If only...

by SHERALYN ROMAN

It's a short column today. The 'dog days' of summer have set in, it's super hot outside and I don't know about you but the heat and humidity makes me feel just a tad lazy. When it's hazy outside movement slows to a crawl and any real exertion seems to bring on a possible case of heat stroke! Unfortunately, what doesn't slow down this time of year (and possibly, in keeping with the season, even heats up a bit) is ignorance, a lack of care for our fellow humans, rumour-mongering running unabated, racism, riots, continued debate over school re-openings and so much more. If only the hate also slowed down in the heat, the world and even our little corner of it, would be a much better place.

What follows are a few of my 'If Only's.' It's a compilation of wishes for our community, our country and our world in general. If only some of these changes took hold locally, perhaps I could then dream of them taking hold on a more global scale. Perhaps even a global movement of kindness, sparked by the resolution of even just one or two of these 'If Only's.' Hey, a girl can dream right?

If only people could agree to disagree without the rumour mongering, the name-calling and the implied aggression that sometimes rears its ugly head. We will not all of us always agree. Such a world would actually be almost as intolerable as the one we're in now. We'd be no better than automatons and all insightful discussion from which much knowledge and learning is often gained would end. Let's have the conversations but leave the baseless accusations, derogatory comments and wild assumptions behind. Yes community facebook groups, I'm talking to you. Foster community, not faux outrage. Some are doing a great job. Others, not so much. It's time for a change.

If only people would get their news from credible news sources and not rely on 'facebook facts,' publications of dubious merit or papers and websites produced by special interest groups with their own purposeful slant on the information they publish. If only people understood the difference! If only we didn't fall victim to every meme created by a bored but industrious Covid housebound computer 'hackspert' with nothing better to do than wreak havoc with the simple click of a photo shopped picture. If you've ever shared something that just didn't sound quite right but not taken the trouble to verify the source and veracity of the facts you're as much to blame as the original author. Winston Churchill once said, 'A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.' If and when the truth is ever finally shared, somehow it never seems to travel nearly as far.

If only these first two points weren't so relevant to current events happening right here at home. So much chatter recently, by so many, without reference, background or a more fulsome understanding, who are weighing in on a recent MZO with respect to ongoing development in Mayfield West. Get the whole story first. Please.

If only people would follow the dang rules. COVID-19 just isn't that complicated. It likes people. It NEEDS people. Without people, in close contact with one another and not wearing masks, COVID will die. Stop shaking hands, start wearing a mask and in the immortal words of the popular 80's Band 'The Police' 'don't stand so close to me.' You know what that means people? It means don't have house parties with OVER 200 PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE! Can someone do the math for me? If 200 people are exposed to even one case of COVID-19, that means how many people are now at risk? I can't do the calculations but I know the short answer is TOO MANY.

If only I couldn't predict the future with such tiresome accuracy. Here is my latest prediction: When a Covid-19 vaccine is finally available, the same conspiracy theorists currently arguing over whether to wear a mask will switch their arguments to opposing a vaccine instead. Anti-vaxxers will proliferate and haters will hate and the debate will rage on. You think mandatory masks are a big deal? Just wait.

If only there was not some random person in one of our local communities within Caledon continually devoting themselves to taking down signs related to Black Lives Matter. Are you THAT racist? Is my simple act of choosing to post a #BlackLivesMatter sign on my OWN front lawn so offensive that you must, under cover of night, steal it? Maybe our Canadian 'superiority complex'?

over our southern neighbours is not so warranted after all? If I heard, from a credible news sources, this behaviour was happening somewhere in the Southern US I might not have been too surprised. Right here at home however? I just don't get it.

? If only this last point was obvious and did not have to be stated. While we're on the topic of hate, if you're in the wedding business you should already know that #Loveislove and that since you're in the business, you just might be asked to officiate a wedding, photograph a wedding, video a wedding or cater a wedding. It shouldn't matter one iota who is actually getting married.

Utopian vision? Looking at the world through ?rose-coloured glasses?? Perhaps. But the view in my ?If Only? world is so much nicer than our current outlook.

If Only??..