

Journey, destination and everything in between

by BROCK WEIR

It seems like everybody is in a hurry these days.

Yes, I realize that's hardly a ground-breaking observation; after all, people have had the same beef since time began to be measured.

Many are the old movies and TV shows where a recent arrival to North America from some vague-sounding 'Old Country' ? usually minimally-described part of Europe ? observes (or, more often, complains) about the pace of life in their new homeland compared to what they left behind.

But has anything really changed?

Based on my own personal experiences, I'd venture a guess that it has, but if you asked me to put my finger on the particulars it might prove more of a challenge.

Maybe it's not the hurried pace itself, but rather what seems to be the increasing desire to forego the journey in favour of getting directly to the destination.

Witness Labour Day weekend at the start of this month.

This year, as it has been since the holiday's inception, Labour Day was hailed as the last weekend of Summer with people kicking themselves into overdrive to make the most out of the time that remained ? seemingly carefree that there were almost four weeks of summer left on the calendar to enjoy.

It is less of an end-of-season feeling than a shift to the back-to-reality mindset, but it seemed like such a waste to write off what was and truly is the balance of the summer.

As much as we collectively look forward to the warmer months, we're increasingly eager to while it away as well. Yet, at the same time, we're also eager to get it started.

Victoria Day, of course, is celebrated by many as the unofficial kick-off to summer despite there being nearly a month left of spring before the Solstice arrives in our hemisphere. Few people profess to look forward to the winter months ? bemoaning the snow and ice that is part and parcel of the Canadian experience has been a proud part of our heritage since before Confederation ? but even now some of us are counting down to December 25 and everything the holiday season has to offer.

Consumerism, of course, plays a part in that as those who stand to make a buck from the seasonal excitement ramp up urgency and eagerness to get as many people as possible on side, but most are willing participants in the mayhem. One only has to look at the Black Friday nonsense in the States, a phenomenon where people are willing to trample over each other for a discounted Dustbuster, and our own homegrown phenomena of Cyber Monday and our fabled Boxing Day door crashers, to get a flavour.

Then there's the trope that sticks with us throughout the summer that would have us believe parents the continent-over are just counting down the days of summer ? dog days or otherwise ? until they can get their kids out of their hair, out of their house, and back into schools as soon as humanly possible.

There's nothing wrong with keeping your eyes on the future, but it's never a good idea to do so at the expense of the present.

I say this as time management issues are near the front of my mind.

I'm not sure how many of you are in the same boat, it feels as though time is moving much faster now than it did prior to the global pandemic.

Most of us have settled into what we used to describe as our 'new normal' reasonably well, and I think I did reasonably well, too, but it no longer feels there are enough hours in the day to accomplish what was once a relative walk in the park.

Despite my workload having stabilized outside of our near-collective must-work-at-home era, it feels like quitting time is getting later and later. It used to be nice to hit the gym after work to clear the head, but more often these days office time is outlasting the motivation and being on a treadmill past midnight doesn't seem like an attractive option. Nor does, truth be told, being there before 6 a.m. the next day to make up for lost time.

I know, I know, that one's on me.

Around this time of year, prior to 2020, my schedule would be jam-packed with trips into the city for the Toronto International Film Festival - yet, somehow, time for more than one or two films per fest doesn't exist anymore.

Community wide, events that form the hallmark of our neighbourhood calendars each year, are coming at a pace faster and more furious than ever before. There used to be a good amount of breathing room between each, allowing each to have its moment in the spotlight, but now the pace seems ever so more relentless.

Maybe it's just me, but maybe not. Also increasing are the number of times I hear, 'Is it that time of year already?' or 'I can't believe it's been a year since?' - and I'm sure you can fill in the blank.

Perhaps a driving force behind this sensation is the increasing desire for instant gratification.

We're living in a world where a photo you've snapped on your travels can be instantly beamed to your friends and, if it has that elusive 'It' factor to make it go viral, around the globe, along with all the kudos that can be collected.

It's an environment where there's a desire to be first out of the gate with any number of things, regardless of quality.

In the case of news, as we have seen in so many forums thanks to the 24-hour news cycle, there can be the desire to break a story first rather than having all the facts at your disposal.

It's a climate where there's a certain social cachet to be the first to forge a new path, buy a new product, cross a fashionable destination off an ever-growing bucket list, or, in the case of TIFF, see a would-be hit (or miss) before the rest of the world can have that pleasure in a local movie theatre.

But, in this quest, however admirable the specifics might be, we seem to be looking forward to the passage of time or, worse, looking for ways to 'kill time' on the journey toward the destination.

But the destination is just as important.

My own experience with the rapid passage of time might not be everyone's, but whatever your journey might be to your destination of choice, take advantage of the moment while you can.

Otherwise, you might feel short-changed at the end.