

This and That

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Some weeks it's hard to focus on a particular topic and that could be for several reasons. The first, without intent to offend, is because I'm pretty certain I have all the classic signs of ADHD. It really, really is hard to focus except when it's not ? like when it's time to read or drink wine.

Secondly, there's simply so much going on in the world right now that I don't know which way to turn and/or I don't know enough about a topic to venture an opinion. On this last point more than a few of you will no doubt respond with, ?it never stopped you before.? All of this is my way of saying today I'm talking about more than just one thing and instead I plan to address a little bit of this and a little bit of that.

I'd like to start with something quite close to home: the recent retirement announcement from our Mayor Allan Thompson. Together with Anne, who has been part of the community every step of the way, they shared the recent news via video and with written statements on several social media platforms (as well as here in our paper.) Reading the announcement was one thing, but observing the visible emotion as Mayor Thompson eventually spoke the actual words on video was very moving. Mayor Thompson has been a fixture in our community for almost 20 years in terms of political context. He served as both Area and Regional Councillor for Ward 2, before running two successful campaigns to serve as Mayor of Caledon. Both from a distance and up close and personal I have had the opportunity to observe and occasionally be a part of the work he has done for us all.

Living in Ward 2 at the time he served the community I can truthfully say that every time there was an issue or concern, he was there to answer my call and/or the calls and concerns of other community members. Dealing with significant and challenging issues like the construction of the #410 northbound impacted many and during this time some folks were not always kind, in part due to their frustrations. Working together to resolve those concerns however, I always found him to be ready, willing and able to assist. On a brighter note, making just about everyone happy, supplying corn to the annual corn festival was a nice gesture and supporting the local soccer league (in so many ways ? for which they remain forever grateful) was just second nature to both Allan and Anne.

While working for another community paper at one time, I was often on the road taking pictures throughout Caledon and where I might attend 3 or 4 events in one day, Mayor Thompson, very often together with Anne, would be at those same events AND would have also attended 4 or 5 others too, sometimes stretching late into the evening. Stamina, commitment and basic human decency are just some of the character traits I believe our Mayor to possess. While some readers may disagree with some of the decisions he has made as Mayor or while on Council, I will forever have fond memories of a Mayor and Councillor, in cowboy ?boots and suits? that truly devoted himself to community. I wish you nothing but the best in the future Allan and Anne and many happy days as grandparents!

On a more serious and sombre note we continue to watch in fear the war happening in the Ukraine which in turn, has once again also shone a harsh light on the war against racism and discrimination. I may not be articulate enough to converse coherently on the intricacies of shared borders (both historically and in the here and now) or on any discussion attempting to provide this war with context but that's ok because I don't think I need to be if I speak truthfully. War is war. Period. There is virtually no ?context? ever needed for war except perhaps for defeating pure evil; that being dictators bent on the elimination of an entire race of persons.

The war in Ukraine isn't an ?incursion? across a border, a ?skirmish? between isolated troops and civilians, nor is it simply a struggle. War is ?a state of armed conflict between different nations? and is, in this case, a flagrant example of an oppressive, dictator-led regime preying on its presumably weaker neighbour. Discovering that the Ukraine is neither weak, nor alone (with many nations immediately providing both lethal and non-lethal support) seems only to have heightened the fighting. The result is war. Period. Civilians whom just a few weeks ago went to cafés, out for dinner, to school and to work, are now madly fleeing, or fighting for their lives. For the record all you Canadian ?Freedom Fighters? - in the Ukraine that means LITERALLY fighting with armed weapons, weapons that could actually result in death ? as in dead, not dead tired after over-indulging in a pig roast.

Having empathy for the Ukrainian people and wanting to help in any small way, has not been diminished by the other war we are witnessing, but rather, is making it even harder to bear continued witness to the depths of human trauma caused by discrimination. That 'black and brown people' are being subjected to outright racism at border crossings, denied easy passage, turned away from busses and trains ferrying people to safety and hassled, abused and treated significantly differently once they do achieve safety, is heartbreaking. War is seemingly the ultimate discriminator but even at war there are separate and distinct levels of hate. It's a sad, sad world and as time marches on my capacity for believing in the innate goodness of human nature is waning.

Forgive my addled brain. My household of two grew by three members just recently, one of which weighs in at 120 pounds, likes to play with balls and sheds. My chaos is mostly 'happy' chaos, particularly when measured against the chaos of war, racism and discrimination. Speaking of chaos, let's also hope there will be no chaos when our good Mayor bids his final farewell and transitions our beautiful Caledon into the hands of someone new.

There you have it, a little bit of this and a little bit of that.