

We're number one!

by BRIAN LOCKHART

The list of the world's happiest countries has finally been announced for 2022.

Of course, we've all been waiting for this prestigious list so we know how happy we are compared to our neighbours.

According to the people who put the World Happiness Report together, they use statistical analysis based on a country's gross domestic product per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make your own life choices, generosity of the general population, and perception of internal and external corruption levels.

Canada ranked in at number 14 on the list, which isn't bad considering there are 50 countries on the published list and currently 195 recognized countries on the planet.

Finland was ranked as number one - the happiest place on the planet. Apparently living in Finland is akin to spending every day at Disneyland.

On the other end of the scale, Afghanistan was ranked as the most miserable places on the planet. That's no surprise. I don't think there will be too many happy people who live in a country where bucking the social norm or saying the wrong thing could result in having your head cut off.

These global rankings are always popping up on social media and news feeds and rank a variety of different things around the world.

Can you really rate something like happiness? Having a decent job and responsible government are good things to have, but it doesn't make you happy. Some people have all the advantages in life, and are still miserable.

I'm pretty sure if you put a group of Finnish people and Australians, who ranked eleventh, in the same room for a party, you would not notice the Finns are all having a better time.

Another ranking that came across my desks was the "worst universities in Canada."

I always thought that was more of an American thing to look down on others for the school they attended.

Thurston Howell III always made it clear as a Harvard man, he detested Yale men, or maybe it was the other way around.

The list named several universities that are considered the worst schools in Canada. Apparently it was created for international students who are considering moving here to go to school. Oddly enough, the report goes on to say that although they are the worst schools, they are still better than many universities in other countries.

The ranking pretty much fell apart when I started reading this list and it mentioned Nipissing University as being in "Northern Bay," Ontario.

An error like that could result in many international students ending up on Baffin Island after requesting a flight to a city that doesn't exist.

The schools listed as the "worst" were all smaller schools around the country in areas with smaller populations. Does learning a subject in a small school actually mean you are learning less, and are less qualified than if you were in a school in a large metropolitan area studying the same thing?

There's an old joke when it comes to ranking your doctor who graduated as one of the poorer students in his class.

?What do you call a doctor who graduated last in his class? - A doctor.?

Giving a university a low ranking is just a way of giving someone else a reason to look down on students who go there as ?less qualified? and the professors as less knowledgeable than other teachers.

I saw an interview with a well-known Canadian scholar during a television debate on why private American schools were better than public institutions. After graduating from an East Coast Ivy League school, many students are saddled with hundreds of thousands of dollars in student debt.

The scholar said, ?Do you really think you're getting a better education at Harvard, than you are at the University of Toronto, which is a public school??

The other people on the panel could not offer a logical rebuttal.

I once had an interesting conversation with an experience automotive technician about a magazine that ranked the reliability of different automobiles. He told me that some of the highest ranked cars in the magazine were the among the ones he saw regularly in his shop.

?Who do you think is paying to have their car ranked at the top?? he said.

On the happiness scale we came out one ahead of Ireland, who ranked in the number 15 spot, and five ahead of the U.S., which came in a number 19.

I'm glad we're so much happier than them.