

Happy New Year

Dan McCaffery - January 2021

Thank God the New Year has arrived.

Indeed, 2020 will go down in history as the worst 12-month period since 1945. Back then we were destroying whole cities in a single night, such as Dresden, Germany on February 13, 1945. Six months later, we wiped two cities -- Hiroshima and Nagasaki -- off the map with exactly two bombs.

From 1946 until 2019 there was a great deal of progress. More than that, the superpowers did not go to war with one another throughout that entire time. Few people realize just how lucky we've been in our lifetimes. Until recent decades it was completely unheard of to go three-quarters of a century without the superpowers being at each others' throats.

Then came 2020 and the worst public health crisis since the Spanish flu of 1918.

So 2021 is bound to be a much better year. But it would be a mistake to think things are going to improve immediately. The fact is that the vaccine roll-out will be painfully slow. The first four-to six months of this year won't be much better than last year.

By some accounts, everyone in Canada who wants a vaccine won't get one until August, or eight months into 2021.

I doubt if the border will be reopened any time soon. If large numbers of Americans refuse to be vaccinated it could be difficult for Ottawa to open the border. And without American visitors, our tourism industry will continue to struggle.

Still, the end is in sight, even if it isn't right around the corner. So we should be grateful for that.

In non-pandemic news it could be a quiet year on the political front. There are no provincial or municipal elections on the horizon. Of course with a minority government at the federal level, there could be an election at any moment. The Trudeau Liberals have already lasted almost 15 months without a majority. Few minority governments make it for two full years, so don't be surprised if there's a federal election by the fall.

As for how it turns out, I think that will depend on how well the vaccine roll-out goes. If things go fairly smoothly and the economy starts to pick up, it will be difficult for the opposition to take power.

On the sports front, I predict the Sarnia Legionnaires and Sarnia Sting will both officially cancel their seasons within the next few weeks. Both were supposed to start back in September and they are rapidly running out of time to get going again. I also suspect the Sarnia Imperials football club will cancel its 2021 campaign. They are slated to begin in May, at a time when the vaccination of the whole population will still be months away from being completed.

To sum up, I think 2021 will get off to a very poor start before gradually improving. By this time next year, hopefully, things will be back to normal. Then we'll have to start paying down the massive debts that are being run up in Ottawa and Queen's Park to fight the pandemic.

