

viewpoint

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114-400 BROOKSBANK AVE., NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C. V7J 2C2 MATT BLAIR, PUBLISHER

Stand with Ukraine

Many greater political and military minds than ours have spent the past week analyzing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But under any measurement, the war that Russia is now unleashing in that country is a massive failure in the way the global political system is supposed to work, and of diplomatic and economic deterrents intended to stop the invasion from happening.

Now a humanitarian crisis is unfolding on a massive scale in that country, in a land steeped in many such crises over hundreds of years. It's true that European wars tend to get our attention in ways some others don't. NATO, of which Canada is a member, was set up with goals of stopping Russian expansionism and fostering stability in Europe. An aggressor with nuclear capability has also significantly upped the ante.

Many Canadians have strong family roots in the Ukraine and feel the conflict in a real and visceral way.

With the rest of the world, we stand horrified by events currently unfolding in that sovereign nation and against a civilian population. The United Nations estimates more than 660,000 people have fled as refugees in the past six days – the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

Canada has long supported the Ukrainian people's right to decide their own fate.

There are very dark days ahead with the strength of Russia's military invasion force. But in the long run, solving the current crisis must be diplomatic.

Taking a country – or parts of it – by force is one thing. Holding it is another, especially a vast geography populated by millions of Ukrainians who emphatically do not want to be part of Russia.



Here are lessons learned after two years of a pandemic

Two years ago, almost to the day, the term COVID-19 first appeared in the pages of the North Shore News.

The front-page headline read “COVID-19 prompts warning: avoid non-essential travel to Iran.”

And of course you all know what happened next: we all avoided non-essential travel to Iran, and that was the end of COVID-19.

Ha ha, just kidding. You like jokes, right? We all enjoy a good joke now, two years into a pandemic that most of us thought might last two weeks, at worst two months. But here we are, still wearing the same jogging pants we've put on every day for the past 700 days. I hope this pandemic thing really does come to an end soon, even though for my own sanity I'm just going to assume that we're in it for another couple of years or decades or whatever, and then I'll be pleasantly surprised when it does actually come to an end before I die.

And I also hope we never have to go through something like this again in our lifetimes. But there's absolutely no guarantee that we won't have another pandemic at some point, and if, God forbid, that



Laugh All You Want
Andy Prest

happens, I hope that we can use some of the wisdom we've gained over the past two years to make things go better next time.

In that spirit, I combed through two years of historical data to pull out some of the most pertinent tips we can pass on to future generations who find themselves in a similar situation.

Now I know that this has become a “divisive” issue over the past two years, and some people have resorted to “shouting at hospitals.” But to keep things simple for future readers, I'm going to avoid the more controversial topics surrounding COVID-19 and simply operate under the premise accepted by the vast majority that the pandemic is, in fact “real.” Along those same lines, let's operate under the assumption that any future pandemic will also be real and not a plot concocted by the human head of Bill Gates floating on a robot body.

On to the lessons of the last two years!

Lesson 1: The toilet paper supply chain is strong

This right here should have been our first clue that not all of our friends and neighbours would handle this crisis with dignity and grace in a spirit of human togetherness. Before people even started getting sick on a mass scale, there was a lot of grocery store hoarding going on. Most bizarrely, there was a huge run on toilet paper, as folks somehow came to think that a pandemic would seriously affect the two-ply supply. Let the record show that of all the bad things associated with this pandemic, dirty butts didn't even crack the top 10,000.

Lesson 2: You can touch your face

There was a lot of confusion early on, as people didn't understand how this virus spread. Lots of us still don't really completely understand it, but we know some of the early precautions we took were a little overboard. Early on there was massive panic about touching your own face for some reason. Nowadays not so much. I wouldn't go around licking subway turnstiles or anything like that, but go ahead – touch your own face. Oh, and you don't have to sanitize all of your groceries either.

Lesson 3: Don't get your hopes up

This lesson stings a bit, but we've been burned enough times to realize how true it is. This stuff lingers, like the smell of cigarette smoke in your great-uncle's couch. I remember cautious celebrations as we “bent the curve” and it looked like we might just beat this thing. That was, like, 21 months ago. It comes in waves. Hopefully your future pandemic stops after an early wave. Our pandemic is like the queen on a balcony: wave after wave after wave.

Lesson 4: Go outside

At the start of the pandemic we did things like take the rims off basketball hoops, lock tennis courts, and put police tape around playgrounds. Those things were dumb. That was like treating asthma by starting a tire fire. The most important thing I've learned is you've got to stay active and get outside. Unless your pandemic is one of those ‘mystery fog turns your skin inside out’ pandemics. Then, sure – stay inside.

And one more thing: no matter how powerful or how orange someone is, you shouldn't listen to them if they tell you to drink bleach.

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