



Apocalyptic

By Wayne and Tamara

At the bottom of a cupboard in a spare room I have a shoe box containing every love letter that has ever been written to me. Recently I had a look through the box and read some of the poems, cards, and long, passionate letters. It made me realize how long it had been since I felt the magic of a meaningful relationship. Despite my romantic youth it hit me that I have not been able to kindle any skerrick of romance with any man I have met since my last relationship ended four years ago. I am single, 34, and more than anything would love to spend the rest of my life with one special man.

I believe I am attractive, youthful, positive and even charming, but it just hasn't happened that I have met someone I like, who likes me too, since my last relationship. Now when I look at the box I have a strong urge to throw it out.

It is not an urge which comes from anger or sadness or even longing, but more like a command from the gods to sacrifice something as symbolically powerful as that box. Without it the occasional trip back to my romantic past will be impossible, those sweet memories will exist only in my imagination, and there will be no tangible, physical proof that I have ever known love. It is like taking a risk and placing my faith that the gods will fill the vacuum in my life. Do you think I should make this sacrificial offering in the hope that the universe will repay me? Or, do you think the chances of me meeting someone have nothing to do with a symbolic gesture, and I should keep the box and show my granddaughters what a romantic young lass their grandmother was?

Angela

Angela, our primitive nature wants to dance around the fire chanting, "Uggabugga, uggabugga, uggabugga." When we are finished, we imagine the headman will step forward and say, "Bring me the child, our sacrifice to the gods." After the deed is done the headman will proclaim, "Now it can rain."

Humans search for explanations and causality. While we think we are more sophisticated than humans who lived thousands of years ago, we are driven by the same psychological forces. Behind books claiming to show you how to attract the perfect mate or save any relationship is the same psychological force which led our ancestors to chant, "Uggabugga, uggabugga, uggabugga."

We want to fight the randomness of the universe. We want to cheat the odds and make things happen, but there is a limit to what we can do. One lesson we can learn, however, is the secret of the fisherman. A fisherman knows you cannot catch fish in a cornfield. You have to be in the way of catching fish; you have to be in the stream.

We often receive letters from people trying too hard to make this happen or fishing in the cornfield of a cheating boyfriend. They are like Eugen Herrigel in "Zen in the Art of Archery." When Herrigel tried to force his shots and force the results, his teacher kicked him out of class. The lesson he needed to learn was, good things happen when we are in the flow of life.

The records of your romantic past are in your mind. Let them stay there. You don't need to cling to the past when you are moving forward, and the man for you does not need these past proofs. What you are thinking about putting on the pyre are proofs of failure, evidence of relationships which did not blossom.

Loosening your grasp on the past and living fully in the moment will put you in the stream. No one can guarantee it will happen for you, but it can, just as it happened for us.

Wayne & Tamara

Kindness at Christmas Time

A Candid Conversation
By Theresa Grant
Real Estate Columnist

So, here we are in an election year, and it appears that it's going to be a long one. At least in terms of campaigning. Right out of the gate, January 1, Tito Dante- Mariampetri declared his intention to run for Mayor of Oshawa. A few other people in different Municipalities have also declared their intention to run for either City Council or Mayor.

At some point a few months back I said to a colleague to watch as the hopefuls come out of the woodwork as though they'd been there all along, informing and updating people as to what's going on in their ward and things they themselves are doing or motions they're putting forward. When in fact the opposite is true. The current Council seems to operate under a veil of secrecy so to speak.

The only Councillor that I see communicating with the residents of Oshawa is Ward 5 Councillor Brian Nicholson. In fact, in Ward 4, some residents have stated that they've called their Councillor and got no reply at all. They've sent emails that go unanswered.

Yet, just before Christmas the Councillor for Ward 4, Derek Giberson, issued an 'urgent plea', stating that we had a homeless crisis in Oshawa and he needed people to send emails to Council for a particular meeting so that the issue didn't get kicked down the road. That was issued on Facebook.

When I responded with, "We've had a homeless issue in Oshawa for years, why are you just bringing this up months before an election?" One person jumped to his defense saying that he had brought the motion forward previously (Probably in another election year). The Councillor himself never responded to my question. In fact, he deleted the question from his post.

It's outrageous that elected officials sit on these committees, have their meetings, collect a paycheck and seem to vanish for 3 years at a time.

They pop back into the picture at the 3-year mark to start campaigning for another term, thinking that nobody will notice. Who knows, they might even start answering phone calls or replying to emails at that point as well.

I, for one feel that we definitely need some new blood on the Council. I am not interested in the same people trying to make a career out of being a Councillor because they have nothing else to go to. Oshawa deserves better than that.

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Group Eco Leadership

by Lorraine Roulston

'Protecting Our Ecosystem'

Every community has citizens who join a group of like-minded individuals. Whether they are known as a committee, team, society, club, association, council, or network—their first discussion in the new year will probably include the results that they hope to achieve in 2026.

For all groups, a positive first meeting after the holidays would be the appointment of environmental advocates to share resource management ideas.

To be gentler on the earth's ecosystem, these 'Eco Avengers' volunteering for this post would be mindful of all the 'Rs' —Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Revamp, Refill, Recover, Repair, Rethink, and composting — all the alternatives to creating waste. This approach will not only cut costs, but also lighten the load of those in charge of cleaning up. Money would be saved from purchasing bottled water or coffee at meetings, as the environmental crew would encourage that each attendee bring their own beverage in a thermos. This decreases the use of single-use plastic. Also, supply a container to retrieve apple cores, tea bags, et cetera from snacks for composting at home.

Another suggestion is for all printed correspondence to be double-sided.

For social events, reusing decorations would take top priority over recycling or discarding. Avoid disposable plates and cutlery. An alternative option could be to purchase several sets of dinnerware from a thrift store. The money spent on disposable plates and taxpayer money to landfill, would now be channelled toward a community thrift store. Either find a spot to keep all the plates, or return them as a donation.

A discussion regarding carpooling might be possible for some.

Although it may be easier to order prizes online, local retailers should take preference. Some items could even be purchased at a thrift store —no excess packaging or transportation involved. Springtime prizes can include potted plants or garden seeds.

If a social group is one that meets at a fast food restaurant, each member brings their own mug. For a round of donuts/muffins, also provide a cookie tin. It sends a strong message for customers who line up behind several people all carrying their own reusable containers.

When the organization needs items or equipment, the 'Eco Avengers' will recommend renting or borrowing.

If your group creates crafts, perhaps there is a waste material - such as wood chips or pieces of fabrics. Advertise what you discard might become another person's treasure!

Over the past decades, we have all been cleverly manipulated through social media, advertising, and the movies to be a throw-away society. You may even remember actor Tom Bosley promoting the larger, heftier green garbage bags. This history has shaped us to imagine ourselves not as citizens or residents, but as consumers.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead



2025 Year in Review: Staying Financially Strong in Uncertain Times

By Bruno Scanga
Financial Columnist

Financial Strategy

As we wrap up 2025, it's a good time to pause and reflect on what the year has brought—and more importantly, how to position ourselves for success in 2026. This year has been another reminder that global uncertainty is here to stay. Trade tensions, fluctuating interest rates, and uneven economic growth have all played a part in shaping Canada's financial landscape. The good news? Despite all the noise, there are solid, practical steps you can take to stay financially strong.

A Look Back at 2025

Inflation continued to cool through 2025, allowing the Bank of Canada to begin cautiously lowering rates after several years of tightening. While this offered some relief to borrowers, many Canadians renewing their mortgages still faced higher payments than before. Growth remained modest—around 1%—as global trade pressures and slower exports weighed on the economy. For investors, markets were mixed. Canadian equities were steady, U.S. markets showed resilience, and bonds regained some traction as interest rates eased. Overall, it's been a year where patience and diversification paid off.

What This Means for You

Periods like this call for a thoughtful financial strategy. Here are a few strategies to carry into 2026:

1. Revisit your budget and cash flow.

Higher living costs and mortgage renewals can tighten monthly budgets. Take time to review spending and look for ways to increase your savings margin—even a small monthly surplus can build valuable flexibility.

2. Strengthen your emergency fund.

If 2025 has taught us anything, it's that uncertainty can show up quickly. Aim to keep at least three to six months of essential expenses in a readily accessible account.

3. Stay invested but be strategic.

Trying to time the market rarely works. Instead, focus on supporting a diversified portfolio that matches your goals and risk tolerance. If interest rates continue to drift lower in 2026, both fixed income and equity investments could benefit.

4. Use registered plans wisely.

Whether it's topping up your RRSP, maxing out your TFSA, or contributing to a RESP or FHSA, these accounts offer powerful tax advantages. Every dollar sheltered from unnecessary tax is a dollar working harder for your future.

5. Plan for the long term—no matter the headlines.

Economic slowdowns, trade issues, and market swings are part of every cycle. The key is having a plan that adjusts with conditions, not one that reacts to fear or hype.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Most forecasts suggest a slow but steady recovery next year. If inflation stays near target, the Bank of Canada could trim rates further—good news for borrowers and markets alike. That said, it's still wise to prepare for volatility.

The bottom line? Focus on what you can control: your savings habits, spending discipline, and investment strategy. Global uncertainty may persist, but a well-built financial plan stays your best tool for confidence and stability.

Here's to finishing 2025 strong and stepping into 2026 with clarity and purpose.