

I've been on this earth now almost 71 years, and I've never seen our world so "different" than it is today. Yes, I'm talking about the Covid-induced chaos that seems to re-direct our lives every single day. It wouldn't be so bad if we could somehow stretch those changes out over longer periods that we could at least plan for – let's say maybe even a week!

This is why I have such sympathy for our school administrators. They are now fully engaged in trying to plan for the next school year, knowing full-well that everything can totally change by the time the school year arrives, and the futures of thousands of kids and their families will be affected. No sooner do they come up with a plan, then the situation changes, the state declares new mandates, plans are scrapped, meetings are held (or "Zoomed"), and new plans are formulated, which will probably be changed again.

Speaking of "zoom", have you noticed also how rapidly our language has changed?

I'm really getting tired of using the word "zoom". I remember when zoom was one of those onomatopoeic verbs like "hiss" or "ping" or "boom" or "swish" that Mrs. Pybus talked so much about in sophomore English class. Zoom used to denote the rapid travel of a race car, a rocket ship, a super hero, or some such thing. Now, if one is to zoom, it means participating in a Brady Bunch intro, or a Hollywood Squares broadcast while sitting at your kitchen table, all the while trying to sound and look intelligent and authoritative as you speak into your iPad. All one has to do is wear a nice shirt, and no one has to know that you are barefoot and wearing raggedy cargo shorts or something else. OK, some people are actually in their real offices, but I've done the kitchen table thing many times myself – barefoot in shorts.

I remember when a "live stream" was a flowing body of water with fish (not pfish) in it – not to be confused with the Amazon, which is an actual "live stream" in Brazil. I remember when "Google" was the last name of a bug-eyed, near-sighted cartoon character named Barney. I remember when "Yahoo!" was something cowboys yelled at rodeos. I also remember a "Yahoo" as one of those nasty, human-like creatures from Gulliver's Travels, and a good way to describe a nasty, unpleasant person. For fun, try to take my Google and Yahoo references and run them by somebody under 40, or maybe even 50, and see what happens... they'll probably stare at you with "goo-goo-googly eyes" like some kind of Yahoo, and have no idea what you are talking about.

Here are some more language related things I've noticed. These times are so strange, and so different, that the word "unprecedented" is being completely worn out. It is absolutely unprecedented how many times the word unprecedented has been used in the past few months. As Covid cases are beginning to drop, another phrase that is starting to wear-out is "cautiously optimistic". I was in a zoom meeting last week, and virtually every one of the Brady Bunch used the phrase at least a half-dozen times, including me. I wish there were a better phrase than "cautiously optimistic", but the phrase "I'm happy things are better, but this thing can snap back and bite us in the butt if we don't watch out" is a bit too long. So "cautiously optimistic" will have to do for now.

I'll just say this – If we all keep our distance, wear a mask when we are near anyone, and wash our hands as often as possible, I am cautiously optimistic that this Covid thing will abate soon (whenever that is), and life will be back to normal. When that happens, we can all jump in a live stream and scream YAHOO!

Gosh, I love this town!