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Do you remember the first time you ever sat in the driver's seat, licence in your pocket and the knowledge that this moment will never happen again in your lifetime? Do you remember the feeling you had as you pulled out of the driveway, away from the watchful eyes of your parents and put it in drive? The exhilaration, excitement, fear all wrapped up into one as you hit the gas pedal and moved into the first truly independent moment of your life – full of freedom, hope and possibility. I remember this moment succinctly, driving my parents red Volkswagen Rabbit down Millard Street into a new world of adulthood responsibility and hope.

I believe that these feelings of complete exhilaration and hope for the future often elude us as we get older, unless we are given the opportunity to reflect on the memory. However, with this reflection in mind I believe that we all can bring forward this level of hope and exhilaration as we approach the beginning of the New Year. Think about it. Here we have at our disposal 365 days that stretch out before us, a blank canvas of possibility. Do you make resolutions? Do you approach the New Year as just another day? Well, I challenge each reader to take this opportunity to dig deeper, to consider those feelings of exhilaration, excitement and freedom and figure out how to get them back as often as possible over the coming New Year. An inspiration resolution so to speak.

When reminiscing about my first solo driving experience I crave those feelings, but most of all I want to maintain my sense of hope that anything is possible. And for us living in rural Ontario, beautiful Haliburton County we have a lot to be hopeful about. We, as a County can accomplish anything we put our minds to if we continue to support each other. We can do that in a myriad of ways whether through volunteer work, neighbourly support or through the work that we do day in and day out. I think it is innate in all of us to do this.

Perhaps this year, as you say goodbye to 2011 and prepare to greet 2012 you can do so with the unbridled optimism and hope that we are truly blessed to live in such a beautiful place. And maybe, just maybe you can find inspiration in the thoughts of what we can accomplish in just 365 short days. Maybe you might just be able to see hope and possibility for making the world a better place today.

Happy Holidays and wishing you a joyful, hopeful and inspired New Year.

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