# Dave Peyton: An annus horribilis, as usual

August 16, 2020 | Herald-Dispatch, The (Huntington, WV)
Page: 06 | Section: A

I am back, but I am here — just barely.

It has been an annus horribilis at Peyton Place. It began in late winter when Susie, my wife, suffered a stroke. She spent weeks in the hospital and therapy. As soon as she returned home, I woke up one morning and my legs were numb from my knees to my feet. The following day I had five hours of surgery on my spine followed by weeks in the hospital and therapy.

I came home to the news that, since I am 77, I have diabetes and if I get the coronavirus, I am most likely a dead man.

I still can't walk, but it is just as well. I haven't been anywhere since I got home.

Our son, Davy, has been with us through the entire ordeal. His most important function has been to keep us in toilet paper. Just kidding. But did you ever believe you would feel the need to hoard toilet paper or see people fight for it at Walmart?

My editor says we local columnists should not dwell on national topics. Leave that to the national columnists. I agree.

But there is only one topic these days, it seems. Everything, or nearly everything, has the virus at its roots. So forgive me if I mention the disease that would kill me if it ever infects me.

The local area is as deep into coronavirus as anyplace, and from what I see we are just as dumb about it as anyone else.

So is this the way the world is to end? Not with a bang but a choking cough?

Meanwhile, I have my birds to keep me company. Four kinds of woodpeckers and two dozen other varieties. Recent additions to local wildlife include four raccoons — two adults and two cute babies — all four very destructive.

Deer? Lots of them, including two fawns and two very proud mamas.

And of course there is the TV where I watch the end of the world on a daily basis.

What did invalids do before TV? Die much happier, I am sure.

No matter what your year has been like, it has been strange, probably the strangest through which you have ever lived.

But we are alive and that's what counts.

Meanwhile, I am full of local topics, some connected to the virus and some not. Please forgive me. I am an old man, set in my ways. I find very little to praise among local politics. They have let us down for more than a hundred years. We are at the bottom of most state lists in nearly every category.

I see nothing down the road to change that.

The more I think about it, the more I realize that every year is an annus horribilis for Mountain Mama.