In a matter of days, we will flip the calendar to a Georgian year with some interesting features. It has very soothing curves. Can you see it? The voluptuousness of the zeros—two of them!—and the near-infinity nature of the twos—another pair!—have always offered the promise of a smooth and easy ride. Lyrically, I’d say it’s the calendar version of the Eagles’ “Peaceful, Easy Feeling.” Ahhhh … 2020 … just to look at you, I expect sunshine and puffy white Simpsons clouds and lambs and lions grooming each other in a buttercup-filled meadow. Somewhere in the corner Homer is eating a donut while drooling.

But wait—shouldn’t there be cars flying above this meadow? And I’m pretty sure I am supposed to see kids on hoverboards, too. I was promised a hoverboard by a kid in a DeLorean. All of these things were supposed to make my life more of a smooth and easy ride. If you ask me, I’m feeling like we’ve all been cheated a little for not having a robot that walks the dog.

Here are a few other things I was darn sure would have happened by now:

**To the moon!** It’s been 50 years since anyone has been strolling on that orbiting rock. I was sure we’d be back there by now—if not with a full-blown colony then at least a visit to check out the neighborhood.

**Glimpsing E.T.** Maybe I watched a little too much “In Search of …” when I was a kid, but I was sure we’d be hearing from E.T.’s kin by the end of the last century.

**Mr. Roboto.** Artificial intelligence may be running rampant on the Interwebs, but where’s Rosie the housekeeper? (Roombas just don’t have Rosie’s spunk.) The only helpful neighborhood “robot” I see is a silly beeping one that blocks the aisles in the local Stop & Shop.

**A quick cure for the common cold.** Everyone gets them. They sap time, energy and money out of the economy with sick days; spread like the plague and make the workplace a crank fest. Scientists, get on the cure, pronto!

**Rounding that shelf.** I thought for sure someone would remold the shape of the mammogram shelf. There, I said it. That machine is horrendous. Amirite, ladies? How difficult is it to reshape the underside of that little plate that digs into the ribs?

**100% recyclable plastics.** The plastics revolution of the ’50s and ’60s promised a better life. And while the
responsible use of plastic has saved lives and allowed fantastic technological advances, our ocean and terrestrial environments are heaving with the plastic refuse. We need to accept responsibility for the spread of single-use plastics and actively seek alternatives.

**More Elsies, fewer cows with ear tags.** Controversial, I know. Listen, I have nothing against you eating a burger. In fact, I’ll pass you the ketchup! But I was sure that by 2020 commercial production of beef would have dropped off a bit. Looking at it from a wellness standpoint, less meat in one’s diet can be a good thing for heart health. Everything in moderation, right? And then there’s the wellness of the planet to consider. Ripping out ancient rainforest to produce beef for a few years? As they say in the Monday Night Football pre-game show, “Come on, man!”

Oh, there are a few other things I was sure would have taken place by now, like world peace, the demise of fossil fuel reliance and universal agreement as to which way the toilet paper roll should spin. Sadly, none of those are even close to a resolution. Maybe in another 2,020 years? But here’s how I think about it: If the world were perfect—whether it’s the world in general or just your little corner of it—what would compel us to get out of bed each morning and give our all to make it better? Humans are at their best when adversity or a challenge is present.

Come on, world, throw your worst at us. Except that mammogram machine. We’ve definitely gotta fix that. **GP**