

EVEN A GRIM 2020 HAD SOME SILVER LININGS

BY ROBIN HENAGER

This year, 2020, started in a fairly usual way with people making New Year's resolutions, setting goals for the new year, or planning their annual vacation. All of these goals and plans shape our spending behavior, so it makes sense to think about New Year's planning as part of our personal finances. Commitments such as gym memberships, workout equipment or classes, savings goals, and reservations at a favorite destination are all planned expenses – whether or not people actually work on an annual budget.

This year, 2020, did not live up to its end of any bargain. Gyms were shut down – literally. Savings accounts have been used to get through unemployment, and travel... well, that was also very abruptly brought to a halt. If any year can create a good excuse for not achieving resolutions, this year can, no doubt.

Is there a silver lining to any of this? Small things, perhaps. Perhaps we can take account of these. Saving money on the gym membership (that might not have been used anyway) is money not spent. Not traveling has certainly saved money for families and businesses. With restaurant dining limited, expenses on eating out have decreased. Families are spending more time together around the dinner table or cooking together for meals. Though this rosy picture might not be the case for everyone, think



about your own silver linings as you look back on 2020.

On a larger scale, our individual decreases in consumer spending inevitably mean lost revenues for businesses, such as restaurants, hotels, and the transportation industry. The ultimate economic impact is much larger than we can actually see today, but for the meantime, as you look back on this year, 2020, remember the importance of planning and saving. Even in the midst of an unexpected global pandemic, savings goals for emergency funds and paying down credit cards are still very important and likely crucial to our future.

In hindsight for this year, 2020, I am deeply saddened by our losses.

I wish we knew, with any amount of certainty, what next year will bring. Earlier this year, in this column, I encouraged you to stay focused and not look away from your goals. Continue to do so. We cannot foresee the future, but with savings in place and very little debt, it will certainly look better than it would otherwise.



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