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# Good News!

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Today's submission was not an easy one to write and that's for two reasons: first I am attempting to modify last week's submission (originally written as an April Fool's joke) but which couldn't be printed as the content might have hit a little too close to home with the Provincial ?lockdown? that immediately followed.

The second reason is because we finally have some good news to share. Or do we? I'm not always curmudgeonly, honestly. When there is red wine in unlimited supply, I'm the life of the party and even though I haven't been to a party in over a year now, I'd be more than happy to share actual good news if only there any to share.

Written tongue in cheek, my original column mentioned Justin Trudeau (whom we don't talk about much) and his Federal Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Anita Anand, had finally secured enough doses of the COVID-19 vaccine for ?everyone in Canada who wants one.?

Now I know you've heard this before, but this time apparently it's true! This means a steady supply of all the major vaccines* are on their way to Canada, and therefore Caledon, any day now.

Unfortunately, according to our Provincial overlord Doug Ford, this just isn't true. It's the Feds, he claims, that are holding up his stellar, ?rock solid? vaccine distribution plan, which would be running perfectly if only he had all the vaccines promised him by Mr. Trudeau.

The fact that we now know there are over a million vaccines currently sitting idle in refrigerators somewhere in Ontario is also not Mr. Ford's fault. So, the good news is there ARE vaccines, the bad news is we just don't really know where.

*Women aged 55 or less may want to avoid however!

Now this next paragraph I pretty much should have deleted altogether. Clearly meant as a joke, I wrote that Education Minister Stephen Lecce was finally giving teachers the respect they deserved and moving them to the front of the line for their vaccine.

Instead, it appears I might have been clairvoyant. Just this week, there has been much discussion about ACTUALLY moving teachers farther up the queue, possibly even starting to vaccinate them during the ?March? break. (For those who are confused, the ?March? break was moved to April, it's not clear why, and to make matters worse, was not scheduled to immediately follow the Easter holiday because that would have made sense.)

I'm not sure we can give Mr. Lecce any credit for this good news, however. To me, all credit for any recent changes in education should now go to Dr. Lawrence Loh who finally stood up to the Provincial government, and to Mayor Patrick Brown, with his announcement to close to schools effective immediately for the next two weeks. Thank you Dr. Loh!

A little notice might have been helpful, but still good news. Citing an attempt to #BreakTheCycle, something I tweeted about last week, Loh invoked a Section 22 order, as is his right, thus potentially saving scores of people throughout Peel Region from contracting COVID.

No, I don't think that's an exaggeration ? even though Stephen Lecce continues to insist schools are not super-spreaders. In a related story, not to be outdone, Mr. Lecce (who has zero authority in this regard) is encouraging the study of vaccinations for children under the age of 16 so that all students can be vaccinated on the first day of school in September.

As our crack investigative journalism has uncovered, it will be the 500+ nurses first hired for schools during the first wave of the

pandemic who will be administering the jabs as students report to school on the first day in September. If true, Mr. Lecce will take all the credit and if this proves false ? well at least the teachers will have finally been vaccinated.

Last week it certainly seemed like some kind of April Fool's joke as we entered into yet another state of ?lockdown? and, yes, the use of quotation marks is on purpose. It seems Doug Ford is taking his license plate slogan ?OpenForBusiness? just a little too seriously, allowing big box retailers to stay open while everyone else, including hair and nail salons that never opened in the first place, had to stay closed.

I joked that Ontario was finally dismissing the convoluted colour-coded system of regional lockdowns acknowledging that Grey and the recent ?modified? Grey were just too confusing, so he was asking everyone to just use their own common sense instead.

The trouble is ? as we've already established ? common sense is in precious little supply and that's just at the Provincial government level! It now appears, as of writing this week's column, that we are awaiting yet another announcement on closures and I'm hearing that everything from a stay-at-home order to, gasp, actually closing big box retailers is on the table.

Now that seems more like a real April Fool's joke to me than anything I've heard so far. Sadly, people dying of COVID because of government ineptitude aren't laughing.

Perhaps I'll really try to end on a positive note. No, really. In actual good news for Peel Region, we are finally getting a second hospital! It looks like the one the government tore down a few years ago, and then rebuilt as an ?Urgent Care? centre on the exact same piece of land is now going to be turned back into an actual hospital again!

It appears an overlooked document of dubious provenance that predicted explosive population growth in Brampton, was apparently stapled to another document mandating Caledon grow its population exponentially by the year 2031. They were filed together under ?Miscellaneous.? Finally uncovered, Mr. Ford was prompted to act with some urgency as if both the visual cues and repeated calls to action by members of the public were not enough. The unconscionable number of COVID-19 cases in Peel had nothing to do with the timing of this media release, just like by the time this hospital is actually built, it will have nothing to do with helping to alleviate current COVID-19 ICU cases causing overcrowding at William Osler's Brampton location.

I don't know what's really going to be announced next, but I truly hope it's good news. Actual good news, like the vaccines that we know are here will now actually be made available, in particular to our teachers and front-line workers. But also, as we are in a hotspot, to everyone else.

It doesn't take much ?common sense? to figure out that any region facing the numbers we're facing here in Peel should be moved to the front of the line to help curb the spread of the virus and the even faster moving variants of concern.

April Fool's is over, time to stop making fools of us all.