

Collective Amnesia

by SHERALYN ROMAN

To date I haven't seen a commercial for it. No 'wonder drug' with a long list of side-effects to take away its impact. In fact, it seems to be a bit of a dirty, little secret, one that no one likes to talk about. The disease that sees so many people forgetful, forever repeating the same mistakes over and over again while expecting a different result. I have no such shame, I'm willing to talk about it. It's an issue we need to bring out into the open, an issue whose time has come! What am I talking about? Collective Amnesia. It's a dismal diagnosis that often rears its ugly head in winter or any time we are heading into an election year. I guess this holiday season we can at least be thankful we're not about to be hit with that particular double-whammy.

The first signs of the arrival of collective amnesia happened just this week, with the announcement that the PC government is offering to take over the DVP and the Gardiner Expressway and in doing so, promised, 'No tolls!'? Yes, okay, Mr. Ford. I for one believe you, whole-heartedly. Except. Except for that one, niggling little detail for which the Conservatives are famous. Now what was it again? Oh yeah, tolls! Remember that other highway the Conservatives took over? The one that would make a fine 413, without all the added construction costs and unnecessary paving over of greenbelts, wetlands, farmland and protected species. Somehow not long after the public purse, filled by you and I, paid for the 407's construction, it was sold and is now run as a private, 'for the wealthy' only highway? paid for by? yup, you guessed it? tolls! I'm guessing Ford hopes the collective amnesia Ontarians seem to suffer from extends right through until election time where, after securing a third victory he'll then institute tolls on all us nasty commuters who drive into Toronto for work.

At the same time as this most recent Ford government announcement, another thing happened. Despite the fact that it happens around the same time of year, EVERY year, once again collective amnesia has struck huge swaths of the population. Yup, it's that time when collectively, Canadians forget how to drive.

In Peel Region, mind you, some might argue many never learned how to drive in the first place, but I digress. No, today I'm talking about the arrival of the first few flakes of snow that seem to turn a number of us into actual 'snowflakes,' when it comes to driving abilities.

It seems that even though I'm edging closer to my sixth decade on the planet (and 98% of that time spent on Canadian soil) I continue to witness the absolute mayhem that the arrival of snow creates. It's NOT NEW! It happens EVERY winter! It's white, sometimes pretty, sometimes slippery, and sometimes hiding a layer of ice underneath. These are the facts. The known facts. Much like we also know COVID is airborne but choose to pretend we don't, once again Canadians are suffering from that most terminal of illnesses, a brain-numbing collective amnesia? one that always seems to affect their ability to drive in the white stuff. I'm not sure if people think snow will somehow be 'different' each year, less slippery and more, I don't know, less stupendously awful, but it sure seems that way when everyone rushes out the door for work at their usual time, thinking that one quick swipe of the snowbrush across only the front driver's side of the car (leaving the rest to fly off into the windshields of vehicles behind them) and then taking to the roads like Mario Andretti, is more than sufficient preparation for the annual arrival of snowmageddon. Collective amnesia indeed.

Returning to a familiar theme, from past articles I've written and the first paragraph of this one too, I'm hoping there's a cure for collective amnesia before the next provincial election. Already we've witnessed a decline in the news cycle surrounding Mr. Ford and his various scandals, with seemingly no one doing any follow up on each and every one of the investigations currently ongoing. There was, of course, the story of some wedding guests and their coincidental ownership of land located in the greenbelt. The Integrity Commissioner cleared Ford from wedding wrongdoing but now the RCMP is investigating the removal of certain lands from the greenbelt at the request of the OPP after two separate 'legislative watchdogs examining the government's land swap found the process to select which lands were removed from the Greenbelt was flawed and favoured certain developers.' While that's good news, we have no reason to worry anyway. After all, Ford apologized saying something along the lines of 'my bad, it won't happen again.' Until it does that is? once our collective amnesia kicks in.

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