

Deja Doug it is ?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

The results are in. Last week's 'Choose your own adventure' column has spoken loud and clear and it seems we're in for four more years of Doug Ford. Coincidentally, there was also a provincial election with the same outcome! Either way, Caledon better buckle up because we're in for one heck of a ride. My layperson's advice to the town's Economic Development Office and the tourism team? Start dreaming up a new slogan because 'Greenest town in Ontario' and 'Minutes Away, A World of Difference' likely won't cut it by the time the PCs are finished with us.

Let's face it, with mandated provincial growth, huge swaths of Caledon (particularly in the south end) are already starting to resemble every other cookie-cutter town and city in Ontario. Rushing ongoing housing development approvals will only enhance this process.

What hasn't kept pace with this mandated growth are local roads. With Premier Ford's commitment to building mega-highways and mega-tunnels, what's been overlooked are the vast number of local roads that are simply unable to cope with the huge volume of both vehicular and truck traffic traversing them daily. It's not just a 'recipe for disaster,' it's a 'baked-in' reality Caledon residents are living.

Leaving Bolton is proving increasingly difficult, requiring exceptional navigation skills, the patience of a saint and a whole lotta luck too. Driving across single-laned Mayfield Road west of Highway 10 is just an exercise in futility and, of course, we all know what a mess Highway 10 itself is. Don't expect much to change.

Along with our very own Sylvia Jones who has essentially been MIA on the illegal trucking issue, Prabmeet Sarkaria (Minister of Transportation) was also re-elected, and if he maintains that portfolio I don't foresee the needle moving very far on the transportation file.

Actually, wait ? maybe there will be some movement on the transportation file after all.

While just under 43% of the province actually bothered to vote, Ford has essentially been given his sought-after mandate; not for fighting tariffs but rather, for tearing up farmland, greenspaces and wetlands all across Caledon's northern border and those of neighbouring towns so he can build a highway almost no one thinks is necessary.

Sure, there is traffic mayhem in and around certain parts of Caledon as people try to head north and south, but you know what won't solve that? Building just 52 kms of highway running east/west, essentially duplicating the 150+kms of beautiful, wide open, paved highway already criss-crossing virtually the very same east/west corridor where the Premier wants to build. It's not just unnecessary, it will decimate the environment too.

If you think it doesn't make sense for Caledon, I wonder what our neighbours in the Holland Marsh must think about tearing through some of the most prime farmland likely not just here in Ontario, but across Canada! As the kids might say, 'make it make sense,' because it sure doesn't seem to make any sense to me!

Another risk factor for Caledon, and certainly one that weighs heavily on our reputation as a location filled with beautiful greenspaces and somewhere that's a 'world of difference' from anywhere else, is the addition of yet another mega-pit/blasting quarry. I'm not entirely sure visitors to this year's Canadian Open at the Toronto Osprey Valley will be impressed navigating around all those gravel trucks that criss-cross Charleston Sideroad. Maybe this year it won't be so bad but who knows by 2026? Should the prestigious world-class golf tournament come our way again, people renting those high-end chalets augmenting the golf course may be awakened by the sound of blasting and their golf game interrupted by a constant flow of truck traffic. Not to mention the obvious impact to area residents and surrounding communities from noise, gravel trucks, deteriorating road conditions, groundwater impacts

and environmental devastation. Given that study after study has demonstrably proven we have enough gravel for the next 100 years, we don't need another quarry and certainly not as an excuse that it's needed to help build the 413.

As for all the rest of the PC promises? Well, I'm calling this week's column *Deja Doug* because we've been here before. We've been promised health care reform before and wait times in hospital corridors have only increased. We've been promised education reform before but have you been in a classroom lately? About the only promise that seems to be 'on track' especially here in Caledon is new home builds, but as for the promise of affordability for said homes? Not so much! My prediction is that we're in for more of the same during this term of office and I've a feeling it's going to be at Caledon's expense. Speaking of expenses, this 'just in,' Doug Ford has his priorities in order for sure. First order of business? Giving MPPs a raise.