

Fall ? and falling for it.

by SHERALYN ROMAN

For some folks, this is the ?most wonderful time of the year,? an extravaganza of colour, a bountiful harvest, and a time for meandering drives through the countryside. For others, it's the onset of seasonal depression as temperatures lower and the skies turn dark earlier and earlier each day.

For cynics, Fall (at least once every four years that is) is also the season of ?falling for it,? where those seeking election get to say all kinds of things, but it's up to us to decide whether we're ?falling? for their words or not. Words, after all, are an amazing thing. They're a tool for the wise, to educate and inform, or a tool for a fool to spread lies. Unfortunately, and increasingly, far too few of us are practising the kind of discernment required to distinguish between the two.

Fall in Caledon can be a beautiful thing. On offer are apple orchards and pumpkin patches, cideries and breweries where you can soak up the last of the sun's warmth while enjoying a beverage; or hay bales and farm visits that provide opportunities for children and families to get up close with nature, learn where food comes from, and how animals are cared for. Multi-hued leafy drives through winding country roads and stops for ice cream are all but mandatory this time of year.

Sounds idyllic, right? At one time, it was. Sadly, Caledon is under siege by nameless, faceless numbered companies (or big, multinational consortiums) buying up and developing land, digging (or blasting) gravel pits, and the combined volume of trucks, illegal trucking yards, and poorly trained drivers, are all impacting our quality of life here in Caledon. Leafy, scenic drives are no longer enjoyable when you're stuck behind a gravel truck or the roar of a hundred motorbikes. With developers slapping up homes, but doing little in the way of developing parks and greenspaces for families to enjoy, the Town is losing income from development charges and families are losing out - period.

One Mayfield West development has been without a park for over five years! That literally means a child, from birth to starting school, has never once had the chance to play in a local park. Major roads are increasingly more dangerous to travel, meaning if you want to take that same child to a park located elsewhere, or to one of the farms or pumpkin patches we like to brag about to draw tourists to the area, you're taking your life into your hands. More development, more gravel pits, a possible highway and the downloading of roads from the region to the municipality will all very likely only make things that much worse.

Fall is beautiful, to be sure. But we already have so much to be concerned about and falling for candidate rhetoric only puts us at even greater risk. If you want to plan a beautiful fall day in our Town it's still possible, but for how much longer?

We're hearing about candidates who don't seem to want to talk about illegal trucking or dangerous roads and instead are blocking constituents on social media. That's not a good sign and certainly seems to suggest an unwillingness to listen to the concerns of residents. On the other hand, encouragingly, we are also hearing about registered third-parties (of which there are two in Caledon) who are doing research and making it available to Caledon residents through their own websites.

Their goals include helping residents to make a more informed decision by providing analysis and tracking individual voting records on issues of concern. One of these groups just recently publicly endorsed a Mayoral candidate by stating, ?Her voting record speaks for itself.?

As we shared last week and which will continue to be shared by this paper, you will have your chance to hear what all the candidates have to say several times over the coming weeks. If you're still the type to ?fall for Fall,? a person in love with a season that's still sunny, and offers fantastic scenery (all explored while perhaps holding a pumpkin spice-flavoured treat from one of our many coffee establishments) then you also know how important it is to protect and preserve what we have.

The best way to do that is to listen. Don't be a fool and fall for the rhetoric, listen instead to wise words, to the candidates who truly

know the issues, not just the surface platitudes. Listen to the people who engage with you at the front doors, the meet and greets and Town events, not the ones blocking you on social media. In other words, since it's harvest time, we'll use a farming analogy: listen with discernment so you can separate the 'wheat from the chaff' ? that is, the good, useful and knowledgeable words from the nice, but useless platitudes.