

File This Under?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

In today's edition of random rumblings from a concerned citizen, we offer up a series of considerations you may wish to file away for future reference. They include categories such as, 'Things That Didn't Need To Happen' and 'First World Problems.' There will, of course, also be random references to 'Ongoing Tragedies,' 'The World is on Fire,' and probably some local Caledon-related content too. You might want to pour yourself your beverage of choice before reading about just what a sorry state we currently find ourselves in.

Things that didn't need to happen include an election and the fourth wave of COVID-19. Seriously Justin Trudeau, is now really the time to plunge Canadians into a snap election in an attempt to secure a majority for your government? This is nothing but hubris and a blatant attempt to grab more power ? all during what appears to be the continuation, perhaps even escalation, of a never-ending global pandemic. This election comes what cost? Well, actually we can answer that. Projected to cost Canadians approximately \$610 million for a mere 36 days of campaigning during a time when maintaining social distance is still an imperative is frankly, unconscionable. We are only just beginning to pick ourselves up and dust ourselves off from the physical, social and economic impact of lockdowns and when you are nowhere near the end of your original elected mandate we question your true motivation.

As for this fourth wave of COVID, I have to wonder if it really needed to happen? In the end, whether by plan or happenstance, it seems our vaccination rollout has gone reasonably well and we've had an excellent compliance rate. Thank you to all of you who rolled up your sleeves! However, there is still plenty of room to improve and without such improvement, particularly amongst young adults, the refusal to obtain a readily available and free vaccine continues to put us all at risk. As well, without a mandate to vaccinate health care professionals, including PSWs who work in long term care facilities or our education workers ? for their own and the students protection ? a fourth wave was inevitable. I'm not really trying to single out just these two groups, but to afford the greatest amount of protection to the greatest number of people ? mandatory vaccination of at least these folks will certainly help. Many universities are already taking a stand in this regard, as are some hospitals. Let's make it province-wide.

Under the category of First World Problems, I'm still on a rant about vaccinations. It occurs to me that only in wealthier, industrialized nations where access to medical care is easy, would we then have the nerve to refuse it. It's kind of right up there with refusing to vote when you live in a democracy. In developed nations (we really shouldn't be referring to countries as first and third world anymore) many of us have the luxury of refusing to take our responsibilities to our country and our fellow citizens seriously because any potential risks are mitigated by the very fact that we live in a developed nation.

Were we to find ourselves running for our lives across the tarmac in a country overrun by insurgents, the right to vote would suddenly have so much more importance. If it looked as though our entire village was at risk of COVID-19 and intubation, oxygen and even basic medications were not affordable or accessible ? I somehow doubt we'd refuse a vaccination that would prevent our imminent demise. These are examples of developed nations privilege ? refusing what others would consider a privilege to participate in.

Speaking of running for their lives, what an unspeakable tragedy to befall the people of Afghanistan, with scenes eerily reminiscent of 1975 and the fall of Saigon. Mad dashes and scrambles to board US aircraft evacuating the capital city of Kabul leave us heartbroken. Desperate people will do desperate things, even attempting to cling to an aircraft as it hurtles down the runway. What happens next in this unfolding tragedy will no doubt have an impact for generations to come. Even more heartbreaking than seeing people literally running for their lives is the thought of the fate of women and girls left behind under Taliban rule with nowhere to run.

Here at home, some Canadians are facing their own kind of Dante's Inferno as towns across BC and First Nations Reserves right here in Northern Ontario are being evacuated and/or wiped out by raging wildfires. We've addressed climate change realities in a previous article, so I won't belabour it here but certainly nothing has changed recently and in some areas, has only gotten worse. The

world is literally on fire ? will we ever learn?

Finally, as for local news ? here's some good news ? it's been a little quiet around Caledon and any noise you may have heard recently likely emanated from such community events as the weekend of live music organized by Annette Groves and friends, or the criss-crossing of Caledon by the Mayor and local Councillors to present awards to a number of our local citizens.

Perhaps you also heard the sweet sounds of laughter at this cheerful time of year when sunflowers are in full bloom at Davis Family Farms and Campbell's Cross Farm. As for me, after ?filing? this story, under threat of an imminent deadline and with all manner of heavy thoughts sifting through my weary brain, I'm about to pour myself MY beverage of choice ? usually filed under ?Things that make me happy, or at least dull the pain? ? also known as Red Wine.

*At time of submission an announcement was scheduled to take place on the issue of mandatory vaccinations for education and/or health care workers. Let's hope the Ford government has decided to do the right thing!