

The calm before the storm

Written by SHERALYN ROMAN

So here we are in the last dog days of summer, enjoying the sun, maybe some swimming, the lighter traffic flow and eating ice cream if you're lucky! Maybe you got out to enjoy a great Bolton Midnight Madness event or supported our Special Olympians when you purchased a DQ treat or a Tim Horton's donut. Did your little ones get a chance to Touch a Truck? That was fun and maybe, if you were really lucky, you even enjoyed a round of golf or two, benefitting your favourite cause. More than anything, what I've enjoyed is a 'DougFree' summer. Thanks Mr. Ford for taking 5 months off. Five months!!! Did any of you, Dear Readers, get 5 months off? No? Me neither. I'm pretty sure all this serenity is about to end. What's on the weather radar for this fall? An election? Check. How about a possible work to rule campaign by Teachers? Possibly. Daily 'news' updates by the Ontario News Now Network? Trump would only be so lucky to have something similar. How about a whole bunch of announcements that will later be retracted? That's a given. It's the calm before the storm and I'm not looking forward to the weather changing.

However, there are some statements that I am happy to see have been retracted or amended. Children and their families dealing with autism need support. Schools helping to support those same children and families also require aid. Backing off their earlier announcement limiting autism funding, the Ford government will be relying instead on an Autism Panel of experts to help frame a new course of action. It's a step in the right direction? let's just hope it doesn't drag on for too long. With aggressive and ongoing intervention strategies proven to be successful in helping children living with autism, every week counts.

At the time of writing we also saw a major new announcement from Sylvia Jones, a change to policing that empowers officers to access enhanced information during a search for missing persons. When time is of the essence, these new tools should help. What we particularly liked was that Ms. Jones also used the announcement as an opportunity to remind those nincompoops (my words, not hers) who call 911 to complain about Amber Alerts, 'a missing child is an emergency. That's why I continue to urge individuals not to waste our emergency resources to complain about this essential tool.' This too is a statement with which I happily agree.

In another 'hot off the presses' announcement, after closed door meetings in which Ontario Solicitor General Sylvia Jones again features prominently, the City of Toronto is being given funding from the Ford government specifically to help curb gun violence. 'Our government'.is taking the necessary steps to authorize up to \$1.5 million of our contribution to be used to put boots on the ground where they are needed most to keep people safe.' It is hoped that these funds, when combined with the contributions from the other two levels of government, will begin to have an impact on one of the most dangerous summers in recent memory. We've said it before and we'll say it again. We always did like Ms. Jones. No doubt she would have made a very fine Premier indeed.

Maybe you're sensing what I'm sensing as I write this. The 'weather' is actually pretty good right now. Perhaps having a relaxing five month holiday is helping the Ford government to pause and reflect and where necessary, to change course and chart a new direction. (He does after all bear a striking resemblance to The Skipper on Gilligan's Island!) Maybe all this sunshine is having a positive influence. It's only fair that one gives credit where credit is due. But before you think I've gone all 'soft' on Mr. Ford rest assured I stand by my opening paragraph. As Ontario (indeed Canadian) residents know all too well, about the only thing we can count on is that the weather will change. It changes often, frequently, and usually without warning. It's been a pretty good summer, but I still think a 'storm's a comin.'