

The year in review

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Perhaps it seems a little early to be doing a 'year in review' summary but we are fast approaching the anniversary of the day Ontario unwittingly became, 'FordNation.' Regardless of your political stripes, I think there are very few among us who didn't watch in disbelief as Mr. Ford was elected to lead the Conservative party over a number of very suitable and qualified candidates. A cynic might even note that many of those qualified candidates coincidentally were female - including our own Sylvia Jones who was serving as Deputy Leader at the time. Since then, we've been on a roller coaster ride travelling faster and falling farther than anything the new Yukon Striker at Canada's Wonderland could ever throw at us.

The Highlight Reel:

- In just one year we've seen the much-needed allocation of \$10 million invested in the horse racing industry and \$12 million to corporate giant Loblaw's to retrofit refrigerators.
- The increasingly popular (and validated through multiple studies!) EQAO Program received a boost when losing PC candidate Cameron Montgomery was hired at \$140,000 annually to head up the well-respected program, turning what was previously a part time position paying less than \$4,000 into a cushy government job.
- Cuts to essential services like public health, paramedics and education were long overdue. Clearly it was time to 'trim the fat.' It is a well-known fact that reducing public health expenditures now will have absolutely no impact on future costs. Lack of access to early intervention strategies, adequate nutrition or following a proper vaccination schedule could never cause future public health expenditures to skyrocket. Likewise with all that lack of investment in public health - I'm confident we'll need fewer paramedics in the future too.
- As for cuts to education, the reality is who needs skilled trades or random classes like math or music? With mandatory e-learning and the growth of AI, I'm pretty sure robots will be doing everything for us in the future. This should free up plenty of time for parents of children with special needs to be able to spend hours a day providing the education and accessing the resources for their child that the school system will no longer be providing. As an added bonus, these parents can always drive their child wherever they need to go sporting completely necessary and very fancy new license plates, complete with new logo. Perhaps on the way to their destination they'll pass a sign reminding us that Ontario is 'Open For Business.' If they need to stop for gas, they can read all about carbon taxes as while they pump. Pretty sure that Ford inspired advertising campaign wasn't costly at all.

But wait, there's more! Recently, Ford announced that in fact, at least over the short term, his government won't be cutting funding for public health, child care and land ambulances. The optimist sees the roller coaster is on the way up. The view of the sky is clear and the sun is shining. 'We will maintain funding throughout this year,' Ford says, 'At the end of the day, the taxpayers are going to be better off.' Will we? Or, as a pessimist might note, will the roller coaster plummet toward the earth once again? You know what they say after all, 'What goes up must come down.' I wonder how low we'll go?

Not to worry folks. If you're not a fan of roller coasters, perhaps the alternative is for you. Amble on down to your local corner store and buy yourself a one-dollar beer for that tailgate party you'll be attending. That is, unless you're a beer store employee who is about to be thrown out of work. At least that multi-million dollar contract, ripped up by FordNation, won't cost taxpayers dearly. If you are a teacher, a special education resource worker or a beer store employee and you are looking for some cheap entertainment, you can always attend the FordNation party on June 22nd. It's free for everyone! It's your chance to meet the Premier live and in person! Who doesn't want the opportunity to go and have a personal chat with Doug Ford? Oh and by the way, if you've already got plans for June 22nd, we hear Mr. Ford is also available on June 23rd when he'll be skipping the Pride Parade again this year. Something to do with lack of police participation in the parade he claims. One wonders if he might be frustrated by the lack of participation of his friend Ron Taverner?