

This ?n That - the April edition

by SHERALYN ROMAN

With the arrival of some sun and warmth, many of us are, metaphorically speaking, awakening from a long winter slumber. As such, we are out and about in our communities and neighbourhoods, talking over fences instead of over social media and there is certainly much to talk about.

In Caledon we're talking about regional representation, federally about the election, and in the greater GTA, the resurgence of the topic of fundraising in schools ? something I recall being discussed at length some 20 years ago when I was a part of the school's parent advisory council. Ahhh spring, a time when the sun shines, or it rains, or it snows. A time that, much like today's topics, constantly keeps us guessing.

Even as patchy bits of snow still persist in some of the more rural areas of Caledon, residents emerge from their winter cocoons much like fat caterpillars burst forth to spread their wings as beautiful butterflies enjoying the sun. Ok - some of us might still be in the fat caterpillar stage, carrying some winter weight, but we dream of being butterflies nonetheless.

So, in a ritual as old as time, we embrace the collective amnesia that sees us ignoring the fact that spring actually arrives in stages.

We take off the snow tires and wash the windows, haul out the lawn furniture and make the annual pilgrimage to Canadian Tire for fertilizer, only to wake up the next morning to a major snowstorm, followed several days later by a debilitating ice storm. Every. Damn. Year. Did anyone else wake up on April 11 and literally curse out loud? Surely that's the last of the blasted white stuff right? It can't possibly snow again right? Said every Canadian ever?and then it does.

Spring, the only thing predictable about it is that it's unpredictable.

Speaking of unpredictable, there's been some good news recently, with the Ontario Land Tribunal refuting claims by the gravel industry and finding in favour of an argument put forth by the Forks of the Credit Preservation Group. The tribunal ?was not persuaded? that aggregate reserves are in ?critically low? supply as CBM had claimed in their testimony. Instead, the tribunal ?was persuaded by [FCPG's] submissions and evidence, including data provided, that there appears to be an ample supply of aggregate resources, with at least 13.44 million tonnes available annually, contradicting the Appellant's [CBM] concerns about economic harm and aggregate shortages.?

It was a tacit acknowledgement that we aren't going to run out of gravel anytime soon from which I'd love to infer that the OLT might also agree we don't need a new blasting, mega-quarry. Hey it's spring ? the sunshine is making me feel more optimistic!

Here's something else about spring. Ever notice how life gets noisier? The insulating layers of snow melting away is partly to blame, but so too is the emergence of lawn mowers and leaf blowers, the shriek of children as they play outdoors, and the steady, rhythmic thump of balls, pucks, or bouncing on trampolines filling the air alongside bird song and goose honks. Which ?racket? do you enjoy more, nature or children playing outdoors? We already know absolutely no one likes the leaf blowers.

Speaking of making a racket, plenty of people were planning on heading to town hall this past Tuesday to make some noise on the topic of democratic representation in Caledon.

As mentioned in this space a couple of weeks ago, significant changes are proposed to how we elect Regional Councillors to represent our interests at the Region. Like the ever-fluctuating spring temperatures, the Region is grappling with a number of key issues including the off-loading of critical services to Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga and as a result, now more than ever Caledon needs strong voices that best represent our interests, especially as we ourselves are being coerced into significant population growth.

Now is not the time to mess with potentially removing voices that represent BOTH our rural/agricultural and our urban interests.

As for the other topics referenced in the opening paragraph, I'm not sure we can do them justice in just a paragraph or two. The federal election looms and it too resembles the vagaries of spring, bringing as it does a flurry of announcements promising much and delivering ? well ? just like you never know what you are going to get with the weather in spring, you never know what will actually be delivered by an election.

One thing we can be sure of, however, is that despite the weather, we all have an obligation, perhaps more than ever before, to get out and VOTE, no matter what the weather. With ever-present looming tariff threats and even threats to our very sovereignty (economic or otherwise) Canadians need to ensure their voices are heard. If you're out there talking over the fence with your neighbours on the days where the sun is actually shining, make sure you translate that talk into action and VOTE!

Finally, there's the small matter of equality in education.

Education, I believe, is the great equalizer. It provides access to knowledge for all and who knows where that knowledge will take someone. It fosters dreams, the imagination, and encourages opportunities for children of all ages to realize their true potential. But it comes at a cost.

While it goes without saying the government should be responsible for these costs, our current reality is such that it cannot meet every need which is why many schools rely on fundraising. This is particularly true in spring.

Hosting ?Spring Flings? and similar events, parent advisory councils aim to ?top up? the funds at their schools, helping to ensure students have access to all they need to succeed. So far, so good. But what about schools in areas that are economically disadvantaged or where many parents and guardians don't have the flexibility within their work schedules to actively participate in planning such events? Many work two jobs, or are precariously employed, and while everyone wants the best for their child, some folks are simply not in a position to support the additional work of fundraising.