

Time for another episode of 'This 'n That'?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

As a person who moves through life with what I strongly believe to be undiagnosed ADHD (and no, I'm not making light of it, nor using the term loosely), sometimes focusing on just one thing is a challenge. This is particularly true in our fast-paced, ever-changing environment, both here in Caledon, and around the world. Also, talking about just one thing ad-nauseam, even an important hot-button topic like truck traffic, is bound to eventually bore the pants off readers. With this in mind, rather than being hyper-focused, it seems like it's time for yet another episode of 'this 'n that'.

As someone who twice ran for the position of school trustee for the DPCDSB, I can say with some small amount of confidence that spending an absurd amount of money to travel to Italy, to personally oversee the purchase of religious statues (also absurdly priced) is 'well, absurd.

In case you missed it, four of six catholic school trustees in Brant Haldimand Norfolk felt their decision to travel to Italy, in person, to view statuary (instead of maybe using Zoom or Facetime, for example) was the responsible thing to do. As one of them explained, 'There is no way the Board would hand over a penny without seeing the statues in person.'

Presumably, this was to ascertain they would be getting value for money, which, of course, is ironic because, first, where's the value for money in spending \$100,000 on statues, and secondly, in approving \$45,000 in travel costs? At a time when we are increasingly holding the government to account for not ensuring appropriate funding is in place for education and health care, the actions of these trustees feeds directly into the narrative that while the government feels it funds schools appropriately, said money is being mismanaged by others.

Fall has always been one of my favourite seasons and not because of the pumpkin spice, me being one of the few people who actually dislikes it. No, it's a favourite simply because of the overwhelming beauty of nature at its finest, even as it begins to decay.

When it comes to nature, there is no doubt that Caledon has some of the most spectacular displays around, with beautiful, twisting roads from which to view it. Of course, therein lies the problem. Caledon is already a town beset by bad and/or speeding drivers, illegal trucking yards, egregiously dangerous stunt drivers (just this past weekend 11 of them were caught in the area of Highway 10 and Mayfield Road alone) and high-volume aggregate traffic. Add in the annual arrival of 'leaf peepers' from all over the GTA and you have a recipe for disaster.

Parking on shoulders, blocking driveways, watching the trees not the roads, speeding and inattention were all in full view this past weekend. The best (worst) example of all, one that I literally witnessed occur twice in the span of about 10 minutes, were folks who stopped dead in a live lane of traffic at the crest of a hill, one car disgorging its occupants heedless of oncoming traffic and the other (the driver!) to lean out of the window taking pictures with a cellphone. You can't make this stuff up. Since we now know, courtesy of CBC Marketplace, that some folks are buying licenses, it's clear that a reminder not to stop in a live lane of traffic didn't come with the bill of sale.

Speaking of trees, I know it's a little late but is anyone going to call out our Premier for the decimation of over 800 trees at Ontario Place? Does anyone care at this point? Once billed as 'It's all yours!', a place for average Ontarians who don't own lakefront homes worth millions, to be able to go and enjoy the outdoors; a children's village, paddle boats, the Cinesphere and more, Premier Ford has effectively destroyed everything about this priceless piece of real estate and handed it over to a high-end spa for the wealthy (who, ironically, claim to have 'care and consideration for all things nature,') instead. Between the closure of the Science Centre and Ontario Place, you really can't help but wonder if Ford truly hates families or simply likes rich people more?

Kudos to area residents who put their principles into practise by engaging in a peaceful protest near the site of yet another alleged illegal trucking yard this past weekend. While at least one Councillor urged restraint for safety reasons, this committed group of

residents nonetheless got out from behind their keyboards, making a choice to take a stand against what politicians have repeatedly referred to as 'bad actors,' but who are in fact people who are flagrantly breaking the law without any meaningful consequences. With the naivete of optimism, I applaud these residents and the Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy group for their efforts and hope with the provincial legislature back in session, we'll perhaps see a firm commitment to helping Caledon, and our immediate neighbours, deal with these 'bad actors' once and for all.

Finally, on another political note, MPPs and Premier Ford are finally back at work after a 19-week absence and allegedly traffic woes are high on their fix-it list of things 'to do.' This includes, we are told, continued efforts to get the 413 built while ensuring transit and bike lanes are not.

For Caledon residents, I interpret this to mean a continued emphasis on single-driver commuter traffic and gridlock, a complete lack of investment in transit options that are not cars, furthering the destruction of the environment and an utter disregard for species at risk who have the nerve to get in the way of 'progress.' All of this while maintaining a continued focus on denying the obvious 'that there is a 115 km underutilized highway sitting virtually empty that would immediately alleviate the critical mass that is transportation gridlock today. This apparent unwillingness to address a completely viable alternative leaves me skeptical of any commitment the government might make to also address the increasingly serious issues of illegal truck yards; dangerous trucks and improperly licensed drivers, and speeding, all impacting residents throughout this beautiful community we call home.

Sorry. It looks like I drifted into the 'talking about traffic' lane. Looks like I might be hyper-focused after all.