

What a difference a day makes.

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Growing up, I heard this expression often. It was usually meant as a general exhortation to avoid dwelling in the past, or to cheer me up if I was feeling ill - the inference being that so much could change or improve, sometimes in just the span of one day. As I grow older, I still see the merits of the adage and have come to appreciate that much like the weather ? if you don't like what you see or feel ? wait just a little bit and it's bound to change. Now, whether that's always for the better or not is certainly up for debate!

What has me thinking about days and differences are the latest round of announcements from the Premier's office. Just a few weeks ago I was lamenting the ?score? between the greenbelt and the government and to say the greenbelt was faring poorly would be an understatement. But with a series of successive announcements, seemingly day after day, after day, a new message was forthcoming, the greenbelt all of a sudden has an edge! Land is being returned in Ajax, an MZO in Caledon was quashed, and Mr. Amato, who fell on the sword for Doug Ford is no longer alone having been joined by Minister Clark himself as he finally takes accountability for the train wreck happening under his nose. I won't hold my breath waiting for one more big announcement concerning any further resignations but I will ? hesitantly ? hope that the brouhaha over the greenbelt scandal has been sufficient to chasten our Premier into doing the right thing with his latest promise of a non-partisan review of the greenbelt.

Now to be clear, a day doesn't automatically make a difference inasmuch as it causes me to rescind my cynic hat. It remains to be seen whether the re-evaluation of the greenbelt land swap actually amounts to anything. We've been told that the lands may still be developed if they ?stand on their own merit,? and that while the review is ongoing, the adjudicator ?will continue working with current landowners ? which include some of the largest developers in the province ? about their plans for building on the land.? A cynic might suggest that still leaves the door wide open for interpretation, so I suspect we may yet still see greenbelt lands developed in at least some areas. As victories go, it's probably a short-lived one, but possibly one of the first times this government has responded with something other than just bluff and bravado when called onto the carpet about their egregious behaviors and policies.

On a slightly less cynical note and in keeping with this being back to school season, I offer this further ?adaptation? to the title theme of this week's column; that is, what a difference a year (or 2, or 10) makes. Parents of littles heading off to kindergarten, I don't envy you one bit. It's a tough transition for you and no wise words will make a hill of beans difference. They are your babies and you're going to miss them like crazy, even if they drive you around the bend sometimes. Parents of middle-schoolers probably aren't quite as upset to see their young ones off to school and might even be quietly proud of the personality quirks and traits they are starting to see emerge as their children stride towards some independence. Hold onto that because by the time the moody, angst-ridden and hormonal teen years kick in you'll be opening the front door for them, throwing the knapsack out behind them then snapping the door shut, locking it and enjoying the respite that six hours of school time offers. Whether that's with wine is entirely up to you - we certainly won't be judging.

Finally, what a difference a year or two makes in the lives of those headed off to university and living away from home. First year students, loaded with new gear, new furniture, new coffee makers and new sheets (Ikea must love this time of year) take over dorms and rentals everywhere with exuberant confidence while their parents silently weep all the way home, still picturing their progeny as those wee little kindergarteners and wondering where the time went. Flash forward to year four, and your kid is working til 7 p.m. the day before school starts so you meet them in the parking lot with some clothes and their electronics, a generous employer gifts them a case of beer (and you think ?Awesome? not ?Oh my God") and you realize you forgot to send sheets for their bed! You hit the road well after dark with a stop at Tim Hortons along the way and after all these years of parenting you realize ? they'll survive just fine. You e-transfer some cash for groceries to assuage your conscience a little bit and that's it ? move-in is ?complete!?!? Yup - what a difference a day, a year, or ten years makes.