

# Will the real winner please step forward?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

When you write for a weekly paper and an election is taking place the same day it arrives on your doorstep, you're at a bit of a disadvantage. One won't know for a little while yet what the results might be and whether to celebrate or drown their sorrows, depending on to whom they gave their support.

That leaves us with little to say about the election itself and only a question instead: who will be the real winners when it comes to the Ontario election?

I'm inclined to believe that teachers might not be the winners. I'm inclined to believe that health care workers might not be the winners. I'm also inclined to believe that many of those living at, or below, the poverty line might not be the winners. Sadly, I am even further inclined to believe that the environment will not be a winner either.

Nothing would give me greater joy than to comment again next week in this space how wrong I was but even though I'm somewhat of an eternal optimist, ultimately I feel the losses will continue to be felt across each of these sectors.

We already know what's going to happen if one party forms the government and the direct impact to Caledon will be the paving over of farmland, wetlands and habitats for endangered species and/or species at risk. Several other parties say they will cancel the highway, but will they? I'm pretty sure the party named after a colour really would ? but as for the rest, who's to say?

Teachers and health care workers, especially nurses and PSWs have been taking a beating for what feels like forever. Once widely respected professions, one is now trashed almost daily by the government, the media and even occasionally by parents, while the other went from having signs made in their honour and being called heroes, to being knocked down in the street by political thugs, constrained by Bill 124 and prevented from doing their actual jobs because so many of them are now sick or have children who are sick.

To say hospitals are ?short-staffed? doesn't even begin to cover the extent of the problem. As for the ?iron ring? around our vulnerable elder population in long term care, the only iron ring that I believe to be in place is the one positioned around protecting the assets of for profit long term care providers!

I guess we will all find out collectively tomorrow morning who the real winners are.

I can only hope that on some level, it will be all of us ? the citizens of this beautiful Province and this lovely town of ours. But when I say citizens, I mean every, single one of us from those who subsist on ODSP and OW, to people who have felt the impact of the COVID pandemic in innumerable ways. Not just the rich citizens, or the healthy citizens, or the land developers. My Ontario includes the average family saving up to buy a home, or working hard to pay for that home against rising interest rates and outrageous prices.

Many of us are just a paycheque, an accident or a debilitating health diagnosis away from true struggle.

Let's hope we've collectively elected a government that will be there to help us through, not just one that waves at us as they cruise on past on the highway to nowhere.