

# WTF

by SHERALYN ROMAN

It's not what you think!

In my world, 'WTF' refers to 'What the Ford,' an expression you might hear a lot around the Province of Ontario right now, and not just from our southern neighbour who was none too pleased with a recent advertising campaign. It occurred to me in the middle of the night not long ago (that time being when many of us have either our best, or worst, ideas) that the acronym WTF is perfect for describing how the actions of Premier Ford have left many of us, to misquote yet another acronym, SMH 'smacking our heads in surprise.

Here are just a few of our favourite WTF moments, beginning with the entirely unnecessary 'resurfacing' of Highway 10, something supposedly required to enable construction of a bridge related to the still disputed (and also possibly entirely unnecessary) Highway 413.

I'm not sure how repaving a road, without changing a single lane alignment, intersection or anything at all really, helps to build a bridge? Regular travellers of this north/south road will acknowledge there are significant safety concerns including: speeding, various problematic and dangerous intersections, significantly increased truck traffic and bottle-necking at Caledon Village being just a few of them. What did absolutely no one complain about? The surface of the road.

It was not excessively gouged, pitted, or worn down at all. Most travellers would likely agree that outside of various safety concerns, there was nothing wrong with the actual road itself.

Now, however? Well, that's a different story. Whatever the heck they've used to resurface the road has resulted in the soundtrack to a scary movie playing out at 80-100km/hr. It sings, moans, and makes a whole host of otherworldly sounds that are not only weird, but distracting and distracted drivers on Highway 10 we already have quite enough of. So, it looks (and sounds) like \$9.3 million dollars wasted to me and has done nothing to address the safety issues Caledon residents and some of our local Councillors have been pursuing diligently for years.

Speaking of roads and 'WTF' moments, it sounds like our Premier is still pursuing the idea of a tunnel under another highway, this time the 401. Announced just a few days ago, a contract has been awarded to consultants WSP to conduct a feasibility study of the proposed Highway 401 tunnel cost. The study alone will cost taxpayers an estimated \$9.1 million!

The words 'nine,' and 'million' in the same sentence seem to be synonymous with roadworks recently, and not in a good way. I have a proposition for Mr. Ford. I'll conduct a feasibility study for half that price and I already know the answer. A tunnel is not feasible. It's ridiculous. There. My report is submitted and you can now brag to the taxpayers that you've saved the province \$4.5 million dollars (give or take) in consultancy fees.

You know how else you can save money? Stop building highways that make no sense. In related news, I want to be a consultant when I grow up. Apparently, there's good money in it.

Here's another one and I don't even know where to start. Allegedly handing out money to strip clubs as a skilled trade investment. Leaving aside the completely obvious reasons this is wrong including: the exploitation of workers, the potential for human trafficking, the violence against women and questionable business practices and relationships, how in the 'H.E. double hockey sticks' was government money, destined for skilled trades, handed to strip club owners instead?

With due respect to the athleticism required to perform in such an environment, I don't think that's the kind of skill development the government has any business investing our tax dollars in. In my other life we run a business that relies on certain skilled trades.

We've been crying out for years that we need to do more; including exposing youth to the trades while still in high school, encouraging trades as a career option, and enhancing the Canadian workforce to secure our place as a province where the trades are supported. Now, in even tougher economic times, with tariffs taking an enormous toll on us and others ? a continued investment in trades could have been a gamechanger. Instead, apparently we're in the adult entertainment business now.

Meanwhile, the Premier continues along his merry way unchecked. Questionable bills are being rammed through the legislature without due process, second or third readings, or the opportunity for public input. Automated speed cameras are coming down across the province (even being removed from school zones) despite study after study documenting their effectiveness. Changes to the Environmental Protections Act, Environmental Assessment Act, the Endangered Species Act, Building ?Faster and Smarter? Act (with accompanying loss of municipal control over the process) and on and on it goes, are all happening at both an alarming, and rapid-fire pace.

You'd certainly be forgiven if you've had a few ?What The Ford? moments lately, and there's a good chance you've now got a headache from smacking your head so often. I'd say that you could exercise your right to vote to potentially make change, but Ford announced just a few days ago that he intends to ?amend? those laws too. No doubt without any public input. WTF?