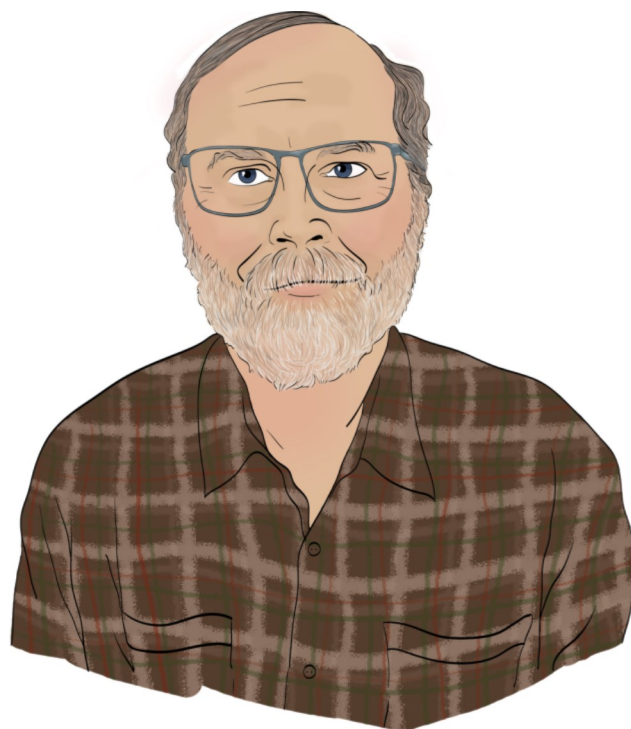


minded behaviour. Members of the ruling Progressive Conservative party led by Premier Doug Ford should be setting these examples of appropriate behaviour during this pandemic, but they are not.

From the premier on down the clear message is there are two sets of rules — one for politicians and another for the general public. This needs to stop.

Since the declaration of a pandemic last March, Ontarians have been told to follow government mandates regarding personal hygiene, travel and gatherings for the good of all. Ford, MPP Sam Oosterhoff, Finance Minister Rod Phillips and MPP Randy Hillier have ignored these rules making it doubly hard for public health agencies to convince Ontarians that their mandates need to be followed.



KIRK WINTER, WRITER-AT-LARGE.

Last spring, during the first outbreak when we were told not to travel, the premier was spotted at his Muskoka cottage escorted by his OPP security detachment. The premier claimed that “he needed to check the pipes.” When confronted with his actions Ford apologized and said it wouldn’t happen again.

Then came Mother’s Day when families were told by public health not to gather in groups outside one’s bubble. The extended Ford clan gathered to celebrate the day with his mother. When confronted with the evidence once again the premier apologized and stated it wouldn’t happen again.

Cabinet assistant and MPP Sam Oosterhoff celebrated Thanksgiving 2020 with a traditional multi-generational family gathering when the rest of Ontarians were told to keep gatherings small.

Oosterhoff not only participated in the day, but then posted it to his Facebook page where it was roundly condemned by many, including the premier. Oosterhoff issued a public apology but faced no discipline by the party.

Phillips, the finance minister, is probably one of the three most powerful politicians in the province after Ford and Deputy Premier Christine Elliott. He has come in for public scrutiny now that it has been discovered that he and his wife left Ontario for a trip to the Caribbean beginning Dec. 13.

Premier Ford said in a public statement that

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