

FORD AND TRUDEAU CAN WORK TOGETHER

So what have we here - those one-time sworn enemies Doug Ford and Justin Trudeau suddenly morphing into best friends forever?

The photos of Ontario's premier and Canada's prime minister laughing and joking their way through a face-to-face meeting in Ottawa late last month certainly gave this surreal impression and must have been a shock to some systems.

Didn't Trudeau use Ford as a punching bag in the federal election as the PM warned Canadians they were doomed if they elected more conservatives? Wasn't Ford the guy who last year gleefully declared his intent to engineer Trudeau's political downfall? What gives with all the nice-guy stuff?

Well, hold on folks. You haven't entered a parallel universe. There's more to these pictures than meets the eye. And fortunately, the story is a positive one for the entire country.

With the reality of the federal Liberals' election victory sinking in, Premier Ford realizes he needs Trudeau to further the Progressive Conservatives' agenda for Ontario.

First, as he tried to balance his budget without antagonizing the entire province, Ford needs the money only Trudeau's government can provide. The premier wants billions of more federal dollars for transit projects, most notably a new Toronto subway line.

Ford would love to see a bigger helping hand from Ottawa when it comes to health care, too. But if he expects to see that outstretched hand holding cash, he'd better not bite it.

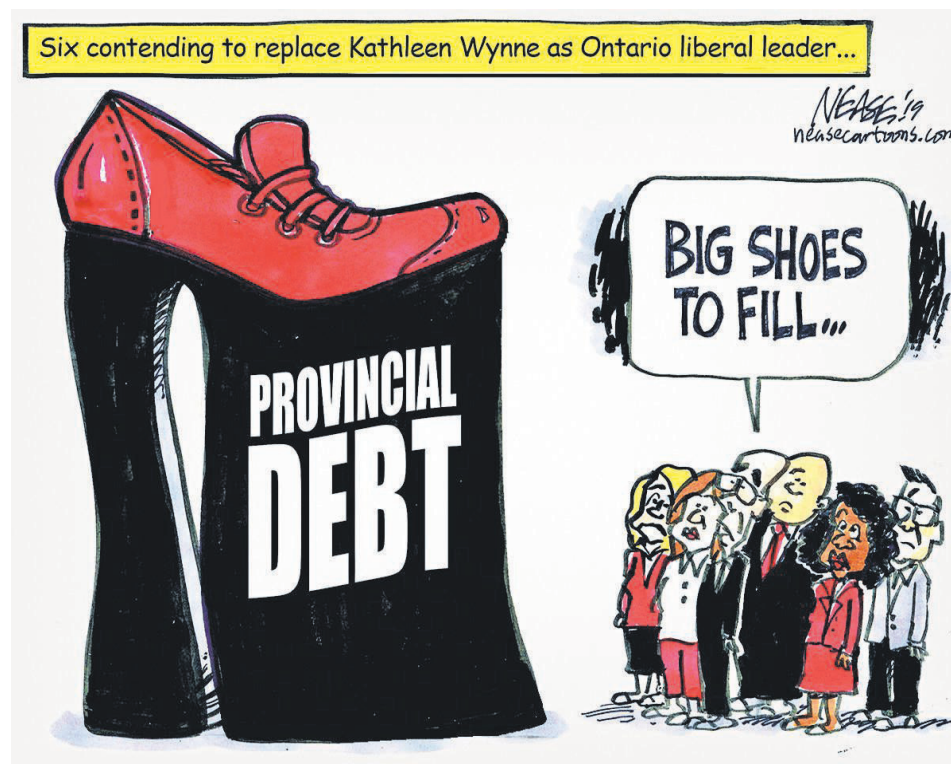
Second, Ford needs more political friends, or at the very least fewer political foes. Since taking office in June 2018, Ford has riled Franco-Ontarians, the parents of autistic children, environmentalists, the Toronto political establishment along with much of the province's public sector, most notably the more than 130,000 teachers now considering a strike.

Ford would burnish his public image and accomplish more if he proved that, yes, he can form constructive partnerships instead of turning every political encounter into a bare-knuckle brawl.

Perhaps Ford has realized the job of being Ontario's premier has a significance that transcends the province's borders. Ontario is Canada's most populous and economically powerful province. It has always been a cornerstone of Confederation. Throughout history, many Ontario premiers felt duty-bound to work with Ottawa for the good of the nation regardless of any partisan differences.

Could it be that Canada is witnessing a maturation of its leaders? Sometimes politicians must set aside partisan games and rhetorical one-upmanship in favour of promoting the common good. Ford and Trudeau don't need to be friends. They do, however, need to work together.

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AN ASTRONOMICAL CHRISTMAS TALE: THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

MANY THEORIES TO BE DISCUSSED AT MEETING, WRITES MARIO CARR



MARIO CARR
Column

Was the Star of Bethlehem shining in the east guiding the Magi to the Nativity simply an astronomical phenomenon, or a miraculous sign from above?

Find out at the Dec. 13 meeting of the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers. Member Kevin Salwach will be discussing the many theories to explain what exactly the Three Wise Men were following

in his Christmas-themed talk.

Please note that our meeting venue has changed. We now meet at the McMaster Innovation Park at 175 Longwood Rd. S., Hamilton from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Free admission, door prizes and everybody welcome. An optional food bank donation of non-perishable goods is collected and appreciated.

While you're there, you can pick up a 2020 Hamilton Amateur Astronomers calendar and support the club. It makes a great gift and all astronomical photos were taken by local members.

Recently, NASA confirmed that there's water vapour geysers on the surface of Europa, one of the icy moons of Jupiter.

That means the chances of the moon harbouring life are a little higher.

Here are December stargazing events, which are listed in the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers calendar.

Dec. 10 - Venus is just below Saturn in the southwest at dusk. Venus shines about 30 times brighter than Saturn. Every night after this date, Venus will rise a little higher, while Saturn falls a little lower in the sky.

Dec. 13 and 14 - The Geminids meteor shower peaks unfortunately under a bright Moon.

Dec. 21 - Winter officially begins with solstice.

Dec. 28 - The crescent Moon is just below Venus in the west at dusk.

For more information, see the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers website at www.amateurasrtronomy.org or call (905) 627-4323. The club offers a basic astronomy course for members.

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This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.

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