

LETTERS

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Re: And we're worried about chickens? Re: Mandatory Volunteering?

To the Editor,

The writer does a great job of putting what's important and today's society problems into perspective. I toured a new chicken barn recently that has sunrise-sunset lighting for the birds' comfort. I want sunrise

lighting in my house! It reminds me of how lucky we are to live in a country with so many food choices we can think about how to grow our food and treat our animals better.

Crystal Mackay
Rockwood

To the Editor,

Further to Dawn Brown's editorial on "Mandatory Volunteering", exactly how does this system differ from "court ordered community service" meted out for legal offences?

The legislation of 1999 vastly changed volunteering in Ontario. Previously, motivated individuals volunteered regularly, for the good of others, often at not-for-profit agen-

cies. By coming out regularly many became quite proficient at their tasks, to the benefit of the agencies' clients.

Pressure was put on the agencies to provide more openings for students "doing their hours" so opportunities for real volunteering diminished as the agencies struggled to train the far less motivated students to a level of usefulness to the organization before

they reached the magic "40 and gone".

With some exceptions, the effect of this change has been poorer service the agency clients, who often need all the help that they can get and fewer opportunities for true volunteers to become involved with the community and contribute their valuable experience.

Will Jamieson

SPORTS TALK

Déjà vu?

I can vividly recall the first time I came across this word; I was still in middle

By
Michael Oke

Playoff Semi-final and conquered. It wasn't for the lack of effort; it was

school. It came up during a conversation I had with my teacher. I was recounting to her something that happened the previous day that defied any explanation. So, I was taking a walk to a soccer field down the road from my house and I noticed someone on a bike about to cross the street. An absolutely mundane situation, but it felt like I had experienced it before. I couldn't describe it—it was like I had dreamt it up. While I didn't know how to explain myself to my teacher the next day, she said it was "déjà vu". Hmm, a fancy new word, I thought.

The term déjà vu is French and means, literally, "already seen." Those who have experienced the feeling describe it as an overwhelming sense of familiarity with something that shouldn't be familiar at all.

You can forgive Toronto Raptors fans for feeling they had seen this script before. The Cleveland Cavaliers came to the Air Canada Centre for games one and two of the 2018 NBA Eastern Conference

mainly due to the sheer force of nature also known as LeBron James.

I know it's the second consecutive week we are writing about him in this column, but one couldn't help but feel for the Raps. They were up against a relatively ordinary Cavaliers team led by an extraordinary player.

They did help him, though, with unnecessary turnovers and missed open shots. The very ineffective contribution of Serge Ibaka, who by all accounts should be their third best player, was also a factor. All said, as at the time of writing this column, the Raptors are down three games to nothing in the best of seven series, facing elimination in game four away in Cleveland.

So much for the "culture reset" pioneered by raptors president Masai Ujuri after a similar whitewash at the hands of LeBron and Co. and this same stage in 2017.

So where do we go from here? It may be a good time to reset the culture rest that most definitely would be déjà vu.

JUST A THOUGHT

Could you please

Irony is a word that gets thrown around a lot, but there is no doubt of its appropriateness this month. Not only are we celebrating Mental Health Awareness month and Speech and Hearing Loss Month, but also Education Week, Children's Mental Health Week and Nurses Week. And, what makes the timing of these awareness campaigns ironic, you ask? Well, they just so happen to coincide with that which is most anticipated—or dreaded—of all democratic societies: election season. Yes, I can hear the sighs from here, but over the next 18 plus months, your right to vote will be called upon; first provincially, then municipally and finally federally. And what is truly remarkable is that in a world that still finds people and nations clawing for their independence and right to choose, we laughingly ignore our civic duty. Only 68 per cent of us even turned out for the last federal election, a stat only overshadowed by the provincial turnout of 51 per cent. And despite all the knowledge that our municipal governments have more impact on our daily lives than any other level, the last election saw less than 20 per cent of Halton Hills residents even cast a ballot. Now such complacency doesn't extend to opinions; those come in at much higher numbers—trust me—but even knowing the issues is on the slide. So, while some may see the irony—or campaign strategy—of the ideologies of health care and education—of heck even just mental



By
Trish Bell

health—being juxtaposed with elections, it is likely the vast majority have little knowledge, interest or even time for what happens once the ballot boxes come out. A mistake, one could argue, our democracy has paid for in freedom, safety and pride.

So, why is it that so many of us care so little about election season? Well, for one thing, we don't seem to put a lot of value on learning about our political and civic duties. Sure, we all learned about French explorers, colonization and the great transcontinental railway, but it appears none of that education stuck. In fact, an Ipsos-Reid/Dominion Institute Study from 2007 showed more than 80 per cent of Canadians aged 18-24 actually failed the basic Canadian history exam; even "after a decade of significant investments in history and political education we have failed to move the dial towards greater knowledge and understanding." Perhaps, instead of peppering our children with never-ending nutrition and fitness campaigns or social media and bullying how-tos, we could take some time to truly instill some understanding in the civic rights and responsibilities of being a Canadian. The general population cannot question what they do not understand and our current math curriculum seems to allow compliance

with financial ideas that simply do not add up. Perhaps as a nation we need to stop atoning for the transgressions of our past and remember to also celebrate our history and civic duties like other nations so that we can move forward. But perhaps this is all an argument for another day.

Notwithstanding, our nation requires us to come to census and decide our fate together, not to blindly give autonomous power to a few, and we—quite frankly—are not upholding our end of the bargain, thus corrupt politicians, faulty policies and incompetent governments are the result. Look at what has transpired after our previous meager attention to political issue: a laughable standing on the international stage; more expensive living standards; a broken health care system; an education system that does all but educate, and a nation that is not capable of being either competitive or independent of other nations. Make no mistake the next three elections are important; they will decide the future of Canada. So, take heed when you hear politicians claim free this or cut that, Ontario alone is in debt to a tune of almost \$350 billion giving Ontario the distinction of holding the highest subnational debt in the world and our children and grandchildren absolutely zero chance of the bright future we were promised. Perhaps it is time to sit up, take notice and exercise a little civic duty, folks. Even if you don't want to.

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