

## Virtual election

From the moment the writ was dropped for the May 2 federal election, it became clear that this time the campaign was going to be waged on all fronts.

Like never before, the main parties and their candidates at the national and riding levels have embraced social media to get their messages out.

Reaching beyond traditional press releases issued via fax (ask your parents what that is) and e-mail, they have harnessed the power of technology: from automated telephone messages (timed to coincide with dinner hour) and town hall-style conference calls to Facebook, blogs and Twitter, they have planted their virtual lawn signs across every geographical area and every demographic.

And while it's clear that at least some have hired volunteers to manage their social media presence with regular, timely posts and tweets, these new modes of interactive communication have the potential to reshape the political landscape — and that bodes well for the future.

According to a recent Ipsos Reid survey, the Social Media and Political Engagement Study, just six per cent of Canadian adults (1,470,000 potential voters) log on daily, specifically to discuss public policy and political issues.

While that number is small, the survey found the weekly numbers to be much more encouraging: 21 per cent, which works out to one-in-five Canadians or 5,154,000 potential voters, engaged through social media or traditional news media websites over the course of a week.

Coming off the all-time low voter turnout numbers of the 2008 federal election, evidence of engagement in any forum is welcome.

Our hope is that the conversation continues after May 2, that those elected into office and those who voted for them, will maintain their presence in these forums. That way, civic engagement will reach beyond election day statistics and evolve into active participation in our government.

And isn't that what it's really about?

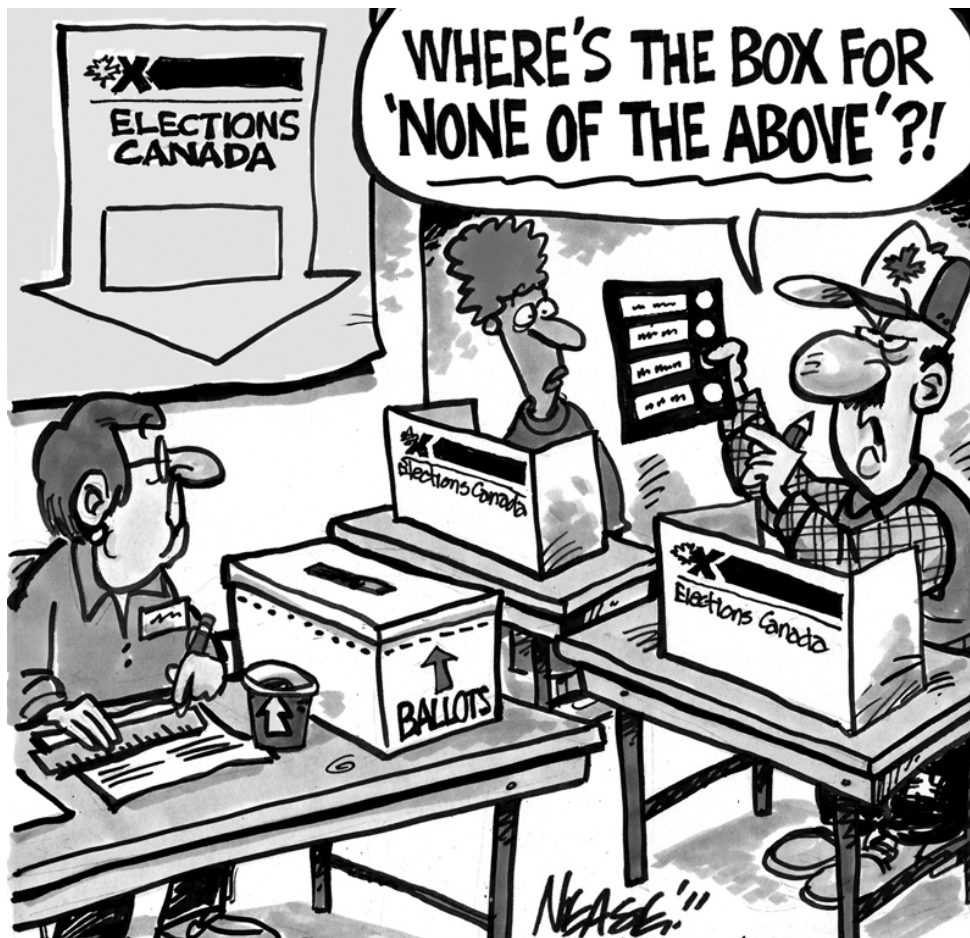
### Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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### WEB POLL RESULTS

Which party is likely to get your vote in the May 2 federal election?

- Conservative (52%)
- Green (4%)
- Liberal (30%)
- NDP (12%)
- Other (1%)
- I won't be voting (2%)

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## Letters to the editor

### Need for CT scanner doesn't need debate

Dear editor,

Enough has been said about universal healthcare, and it's sustainability, accompanied by petty issues of who should have access to our local hospital. Here is a reality check for everyone to consider.

Recently we had occasion to take our daughter to the local emergency department as a result of an unexpected condition. The on-duty doctor was efficient and thorough, however, he lacked the ability to order a CT scan because the hospital does not have a scanner. He decided it was a necessary procedure, and our daughter was immediately transported by ambulance to Milton for the scan.

The result indicated that she had a serious bleed into her brain and she was airlifted to the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, treated over a two-week period, and is now a healthy teenager again.

The recurring comments were that it was so fortunate that she was able to tell us of the problem, and that with her issue, diagnosis and initial speed of treatment were

what kept us from discussing more sombre issues.

We need to take a step back and reassess our priorities.

All homeowners are going to be subjected to a tax levy for the new arenas, whether you use them or not. We have no issue with this. However, when the issue is health care, let's be realistic. There will not be enough public money available for some time for a CT scanner, is it really such a big issue to unite as a community, to fund this necessary piece of equipment now?

Marie Duff and Steve Culf,  
Georgetown

### More than a wee shame

Dear editor,

Re: Provincial regulations force bakery layoffs (March 15 *Independent & Free Press*).

For the record, my family and I have been eating these Miller's Bakery meat pies for as long as I can remember. To have a wee taste from home is such a thrill and to hear about the issues Miller's Scottish Bakery is experiencing as of late is just astounding.

I do hope that there is a solution in the making. It would be an absolute shame if this issue is not resolved by the authorities.

The landed immigrants of Scottish descent enjoy some comforts from home and again, it would be a shame if these are also banished for sale. There is nothing like a Scottish breakie!

Pauline Webster, Georgetown

### Miss T will be missed

Dear editor,

Words alone cannot express our deep sorrow as we mourn the loss of a great teacher who touched the lives of many students over the years both as a teacher and principal.

Miss Cynthia Tobin, "Miss T", dedicated her life to the teaching profession, generously giving her time and love to all she encountered. She inspired us with her enthusiasm and love for life which was contagious and respect for her was not only demanded but quickly gained.

We have lost our teacher, mentor, coach and friend but our loss is truly heaven's gain.

Miss T, you have earned your right to find your place among heaven's brightest angels. We are honoured to have known such a beautiful woman as yourself.

Jim and Angie Flynn,  
Class of '76  
Georgetown