

Work daze

It appears we may be looking at working a couple years more than expected, and not by choice.

If changes to the federal retirement benefits program hinted at by Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently are implemented, our golden years may have to wait.

There's no question Canadians are collectively staring down the barrel of a financial gun when it comes to the aging population and the quantity of people who will reach retirement age in the next few years.

According to government statistics, the number of Canadians, aged 65 and older, is expected to reach 9.3 million by 2030— double what it is now. As a result of the growing number of seniors, and longer life expectancies, the cost of the Old Age Security program is expected to reach \$108 billion per year in 2030, up from the current \$36 billion.

Obviously something has to be done, but Harper has a long way to go if he thinks people will accept this without being sure all other possibilities have been explored, and ruled out with good cause.

It seems he's taken a page from Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty's book on this one— implement something people don't like, such as a brand new health tax, early in the term so they forget before the next vote.

While we're toiling away at work for a couple years longer, at least we can look forward to the spending spree set to be unleashed near the end of the term, assuming Harper keeps reading McGuinty's book.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

Was Halton Regional Council right in voting to maintain fluoridation of the Region's water system?

- No (62%)
- Yes (38%)

The Independent & Free Press

The Independent & Free Press is published Tuesday and Thursday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.



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Letters policy

Letters must include an address and daytime phone 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Anonymous letters will not be published.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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Letters to the editor

Transferred teacher inspired students

Dear editor,

The removal of Ms. Wallace from Georgetown District High School has not only deprived current students of a great teacher, but also an entire community of a unique tradition of musical inspiration.

In her decades of teaching Ms. Wallace has established a rare culture for students centering on artistic appreciation, but also rousing dedication, work ethics, and drives for success in all those who participated.

Ms. Wallace's legacy has been her ability to mobilize these qualities and derive success from many unlikely situations. The way she assembled her music groups exemplifies this: she invited anyone displaying an interest in music to participate, no matter their initial talent. All students who joined were inspired to commit themselves to improvement and growth as a group. At national competitions these bands repeatedly scored higher than dozens of other groups in which students had been meticu-

lously selected through auditions, and many students were denied participation.

The degree to which she inspired individual growth in students was also incredible. My brother, for example, entered the music department in Grade 9 barely able to play an instrument. Barely three years later he was a feature soloist for Wallace's three-time national gold medal winning jazz band.

Wallace dedicated 28 years to elevating the work ethics of her students. Her removal has deprived Georgetown of a long-standing tradition of excellence.

Elizabeth Shelley,
Georgetown

Fluoride's flaws

Dear editor,

Re: *Fluoride to stay in Halton's water* (Feb. 2).

A great day for Halton. Council has just taken the magnificent step of keeping fluoride in our water. I read the great article in the Georgetown paper, and the editorial saying what a great decision this is. So everything is good, right?

Oh heck, people on this list posted by the mayor of Burlington to advise on just how great fluoride is are all

employed by the government, which can no doubt force fluoride down our throats.

I think it's great that Health Canada spends all this time and money on my behalf. We all know that Health Canada's word is law. They never make mistakes, do they? Never a bad decision— oh, I forgot— thalidomide, cigarettes, asbestos, etc. No one got hurt, did they?

One thing I do find really good is that dentists and doctors are trying to put themselves out of business. Less cavities— less work. It takes extremely dedicated people to want to put themselves out of a job.

I have been told that fluoride contains, amongst other chemicals, arsenic. Now that's really good for you. Personally, I think I had better increase my intake of town water to get my optimum dose of all the great benefits this material gives one. If eight glasses are good, 10 will be better.

I congratulate the council members who voted to keep fluoride in the water. I have never personally been interviewed by a council member as to even if I have teeth. Drinking fluoride for some obviously will not keep cavities away. However, if it only stops one cavity it will be worth it.

John Shadbolt, Acton