

EDITORIAL

with Dawn Brown

Election Day

It's Election Day, and we as a province will decide on our next Provincial Premier. For some, opting out of exercising their right to vote wouldn't even occur to them. Having the right to have a say in our government is something they value, while others, perhaps unimpressed with the candidates running or disillusioned by government in general, will opt not to vote.

Though, one could argue that choosing not to vote is as much right as marching down to the nearest polling station and marking the candidate of your choice, I'm not buying it—especially when I hear arguments like “They're all corrupt” or “They're all the same”. These sound to me like the things people say to excuse their own apathy or, perhaps more accurately, laziness.

The main parties all have different leaders, different platforms—admittedly some clearer than others—different views on different topics. I'm always somewhat amazed by the number of hours people spend on social media platforms, or reading amusing memes, watching YouTube videos, but taking 20 minutes to help decide who they want making decisions about their future is just too much work. Simply searching “Ontario Election Platforms 2018” in Google brought up a number sources with information regarding each party's platform—some detailed, some snap shot—but really, there is no excuse when so much information is available for us to review anytime or anywhere.

Voting isn't just a right—and believe me it is, there are a number of people in the world who would be grateful for the opportunity to have input into their government—but a responsibility, as well. The fact is no candidate, no party is going to be perfect, but the only way we can determine what we believe to be the best future for ourselves, loved ones and the province is to exercise that right to vote.

So, if you haven't already, get out there and vote.



The Acton Citizens' Band hosted its annual Spring Concert at Bethel Church on Sunday. Lead by bandmaster Jeff Carr, the 33 members performed medleys from movie themes including *Lion King*, *Mission Impossible*, *Spider Man* and *Hawaii Five-0*. Proceeds from event went to the Acton Food Bank. - Harry Rudolfs photo

EQAO from stress to easy-peazy

Just over a year ago, Little J came home from school with a discovery. That fall she was entering grade three and in grade three they will complete EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) or as it is also known as, standardized testing for grade three, six and nine. EQAO has been in existence since 1996—22 years of testing.

EQAO testing is not a full year. For grade three, it is three days and not full days. However, with the exception of some spelling tests or math quizzes and a few small projects tossed into the mix, this is the first real “testing” most kids experience. The tests are supposed to measure students' skills and knowledge in relation to the provincial standard and results are used to compare school and boards throughout the province. There has been a lot of discussion over EQAO over the years. Many educators don't agree with standardized testing as it doesn't take into consideration the different levels of students and many consider this unfair. It is also an on-going topic with Provincial elections like we are in the throws of now.

When Little J found out she would be involved with EQAO, she almost immediately began to have concerns. I remember throughout the summer there were many discussions about her



By
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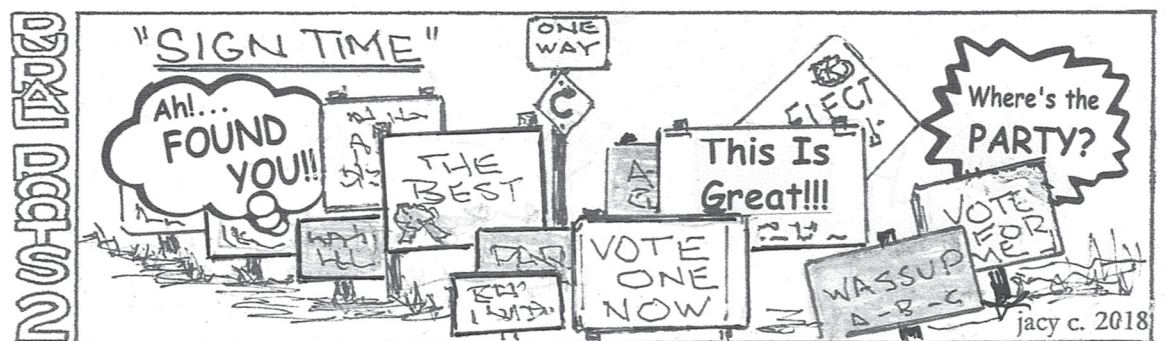
worrying about the testing. When we were at a relative's cottage she even had her uncle google EQAO questions and requested that he work with her to prep for the testing. This was prior to even entering grade three. The worry was real. The concern for the testing was something that I can't remember experiencing until I was in high school during exam weeks.

Even though throughout the year her teacher would work with the students on different items they needed to be prepared for, the anxiety was still present. One phrase lingered. Four stupid letters that, really, most kid don't even know what they truly mean, had caused her to be so distraught. A few weeks ago, I was talking to a fellow grade three mom whose son was worrying, as well. She shared with me her words of wisdom to him. “You know what happens if you don't do well on the test?” she asked him. He couldn't answer. She told him, “Nothing. Nothing happens.” She continued, “You know what happens if you do awesome?” Again, he didn't answer, but she replied,

“Still nothing.” This is exactly what I told Little J. Probably one hundred times, I would tell her, “Don't worry about it. The test doesn't matter.” However, when this is the first time they are experiencing a test that they get told is happening about a year in advance, how can they not worry?

On day one, she came home from school. I was expecting a teary-eyed kid, and instead I was met with a young lady smiling ear to ear. “How was it today?” I asked. “Great... easy-peazy,” she told me. Day two was much similar, and after day three, she explained that they were being rewarded with a sundae party by her teacher. This was probably the greatest move by any teacher ever during EQAO.

Apparently, we get a ministry report in the fall telling parents how their student performance was in a very basic manner. I'd be lying if I said I didn't want to know. I realise standardized testing has some issues, however, I do feel that the results may help direct parents to help to either improve or understand their child's areas of concern. I think the bigger concern about the testing is to help students better learn to deal with the mystery of the testing process, and how their scores are to be looked at in the provincial picture not just in their little bubble.



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