

- EDITORIAL -

Time to close the tap on microplastics

Bottled water is very likely contaminated with small particles of plastic, says a new study, and the bottling process could be the reason.

Researchers at the State University of New York Fredonia analyzed 259 bottles from nine countries.

The results showed 93 per cent of the bottles showed signs of microplastic contamination.

There are no specific regulations regarding microplastics in bottled water in Canada, the United States or Europe, since there isn't enough evidence to suggest how much plastic exposure can be harmful to humans.

To complicate things, microbeads, a type of microplastic, are very small pieces of plastic that are added as exfoliants to beauty products, cleansers and toothpastes.

These particles easily pass through water filtration systems.

However, Ottawa says it will ban the sale of shower gels, toothpaste and facial cleaners containing plastic microbeads by this July.

That's a good thing - since the study of microplastics on human health is in its infancy.

"With a lot of this microplastics research we're still at a ground level where we understand that this stuff is everywhere, but what we have less information on is what impact it has on human health and ecosystems,"

Dr. Michael Rennie, Canada Research Chair in Freshwater Ecology and Fisheries, told the media.

It's time these little bits of plastic we use, often just to whiten our teeth, are replaced.

Clay, sugar, salt or fruits are alternatives to microbeads, and as more and more countries ban their use, companies are looking into alternatives.

Beauty industry scientists have already produced some good options.

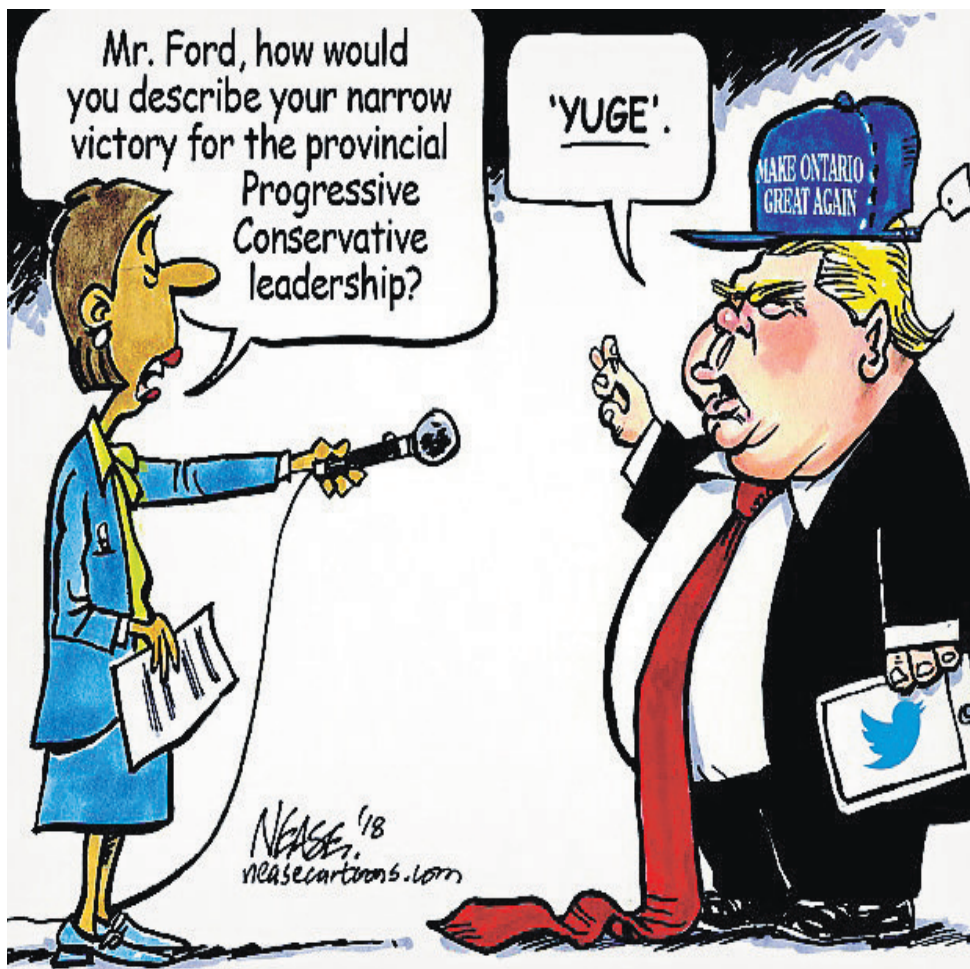
Deb, a producer of hand wash products in the U.K., was among the first adopters in the industry to take steps to eliminate the use of microbeads.

Deb owns patented technologies for a method of making 'natural abrasives' made from washed and ground walnut shells, ground apricot kernels and/or olive kernels.

In another recently patented product, Deb has been using corn meal in cleansing formulations.

Closer to home, in the U.S., graduates from Purdue University say they have developed an alternative made from soy oil. Called SoyFoliolate, the soy microbead is currently undergoing tests.

Surely, in this day and age, we can find an alternative that's better than swallowing plastic.



- LETTERS & COMMENTARY -

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United States should take control of its guns

This should not affect us, but it does. Another mass shooting took place in the U.S. a few weeks ago and this time it was teenagers who were killed. There have been 18 mass shootings in the U.S. since Jan. 1 of this year!

The news media has not reported them all because they deem other stories more newsworthy (I think!). First, we had Sandy Hook where 26 children and adults were murdered, then there was the nightclub shooting in Florida where 50 people were also murdered. Then we had 58 people murdered in Las Vegas because they wanted to go to an outdoor

concert to hear some music. I do not have to go on.

There are some people in Canada who lobby for more lax gun laws like they "have in the States." I would not want to live in a country that has gun laws like they do in the U.S. because I would not want to be constantly afraid a person might kill me for looking at them.

I have always said that people are allowed to have their own beliefs about gun control. No more! We have very strict gun control laws in this country and the laws should be even more strict than they are. God forbid we should become like our neighbour to the south.

Japan has very very strict gun laws. A person cannot even buy a handgun there. If someone in Japan wants to buy another type of gun, the authorities want to know why they want a gun. The person then has to pass a medical and mental stability test and they must also pass a written test before they will even be considered to be allowed to purchase a gun.

There are a lot of gun owners who behave responsibly when it comes to weapons, but there are also a lot of illegal guns that people use. Please use your own sense of what is right and what is wrong when it comes to any weapon.

Ron Horner

Stephen Hawking will be missed

Stephen Hawking was a great scientific mind that helped in our understanding of the universe, even if most people couldn't understand his work. He was also a very successful author.

His work included Black Holes, which may be symbolic, as he did not wallow in a personal black hole when he became ill.

He fought it and showed that handicaps do not stop you.

His humour and wit was shown through his cameos on Big Bang Theory. A piece of trivia - he was the only person to appear on Star Trek as themselves.

He was a great role model for all.

Dennis Fitzgerald

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