



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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To call or not to call

Does Premier Ernie Eves honestly expect Ontarians to believe the resurrection of SARS in Toronto and the lockout of 3,500 of the city's Catholic teachers are the real reasons he may not call an election this week?

Perhaps he could explain how it is that these issues prevent politicians from campaigning or the public's ability to choose its next provincial government. Quite simply, he can't, because they don't.

According to Toronto's associate medical officer of health, the most recent SARS cases are confined to medical institutions and don't represent an outbreak among the general population.

As for the teacher lockout, which affects some 69,000 Toronto students, the situation appears to play right into the hands of a premier who's promising to ban strikes by teachers in his latest series of pre-election television spots.

Is it not entirely possible that recent polls showing the Tories lagging behind in popularity have significantly more to do with Eves' suggestion that an election can wait?

The Tory strategy to date has been to keep opposing parties, the media and the roughly 60 per cent of registered voters who exercise their democratic right, guessing as to when the election will come.

Logic has dictated either a June or September election, but a weekend Toronto Star report had Eves suggesting he wasn't thinking of elections right now with SARS and teacher labour strife back in the headlines. Could it be that his comments were part of the political gamesmanship prior to a snap election call?

If an election isn't called by the end of this week, then it won't be called until the fall; that much is certain.

However, Eves has no guarantee that SARS is going away anytime soon and he only has until June of next year to make his party's bid for a third consecutive victory at the polls.

What if SARS lingers through the fall and into the winter? What then, Mr. Premier?

Somewhat more believable is that party insiders are telling Eves sending the electorate to the polls right now wouldn't yield the desired result.

Should the summer pass and the premier still doesn't have the stomach to drop the writ, perhaps West Nile virus can become his excuse du jour. Call us cynical, but we suspect the importance of addressing SARS and teacher labour disputes might suddenly wane should the Tories experience even the slightest surge in popularity.

Never underestimate the power of a cheerful smile

It's happened more than once.

I'm on my way to work one morning and I'm not in the most cheerful of moods because, well, it's morning.

I get off Hwy. 401 and travel along Regional Road 25 as it turns into Martin Street. I'm usually stopped by a red light — "Just my luck," I grumble — in front of Martin Street School, at the corner of Martin Street and Woodward Avenue.

And that's when my day is turned around by the crossing guard who's usually on the last minute or two of her shift. I've never spoken to her, nor even made eye contact. But I always watch her because she's always smiling. And that makes me smile.

For some reason, I always smile in response and then begin to ponder what she might be smiling about. Is she happy because she's almost done

her shift? That may be part of it, but I suspect she's just as cheery at the beginning.

Does she have a Martha Stewart-type husband who wakes up in the wee hours of the morning to cook her breakfast in bed?

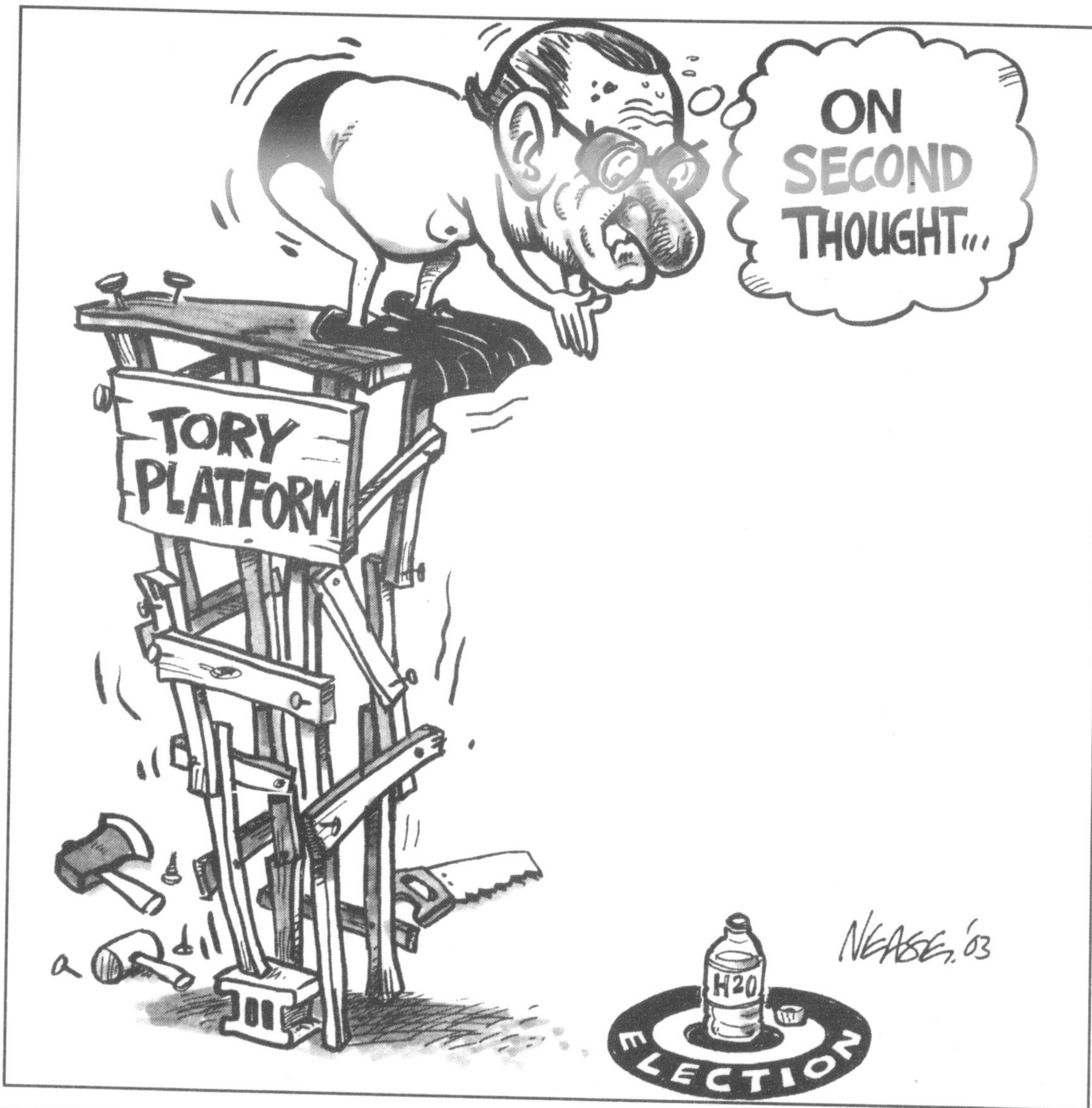
Does she have children who never talk back and shower her with praise each morning?

Or maybe she simply loves her job. Maybe she realizes what an opportunity she has to start kids' days off on the right foot by greeting them with a smile.

It may be any combination of the above — although I suspect the first is highly unlikely — that puts that smile on her face.

Or it may be simply that she has learned to be content no matter what the situation. As my mother used to tell me, life isn't about circumstances, but your attitude.

Whatever causes her to smile, I suspect it's the



OUR READERS WRITE

Some dog owners not cleaning up after pets

Dear Editor:

I'm disgusted that citizens of Milton, especially my neighbours, don't pick up after their dogs.

In the last two weeks alone I've witnessed six occasions when the owners let their dogs do their business and just kept walking.

On one particular day last week, I stopped and watched a lady let her dog poop on someone else's lawn

and walk away.

When I asked her if she was going to pick it up, she told me "my dog didn't poop-poop, only pee-pee."

I was utterly disgusted, especially after I saw the dog poop. I also had to clean up a dog mess in my driveway last week. It's bad enough when they bark all night long.

I don't own a dog, nor do I want

one. All I know is I want my one-year-old son to be able to play outside without worrying about getting into dog poop. I'm starting to realize that others don't want them either because they can't ever clean up after them. I can only imagine what their houses look like?

Please clean up after your dogs.

Tanya Wedow
Milton

Reader says Pesticide Exchange Week notice helpful

Dear Editor:

I was happy to receive in the mail recently a bulletin regarding the upcoming Pesticide Exchange Week, when Halton homeowners are invited to discard their pesticides at the hazardous waste depot.

Congratulations to Halton Region and its partners, including the Town of Milton, for this campaign.

It's wonderful to see our municipalities recognizing that the hazardous waste depot is indeed where these products belong, rather than on our lawns. The bulletin also includes a calendar outlining natural lawn care techniques. This information is most helpful.

Erika Ristok
Milton



Around town

with STEPHANIE THIESSEN

same bug that bit the man who used to ride by me every morning on his bicycle while I waited for the bus when I worked in Brampton.

Rain or shine, this non-descript-looking man would invariably stop his peddling just long enough to smile and say "Hello" and "How are you?"

No matter how depressing the weather or how

shiny and new the cars were that drove by him, his smile didn't waiver. He was content with what he had. If the grumps existed before, they were certainly gone after he whirled by.

Not to get too sentimental, but it's obvious a smile is infectious — a chain reaction. Once one person receives a smile, she can't help but smile in return. Chances are, someone else is looking at that second smile and feeling a little happier all of a sudden.

It's quite intriguing, actually. Just how many people are affected by one set of upward stretched lips?

To the crossing guard at Martin Street and Woodward Avenue, thanks. I've been reminded to never underestimate the power of a smile.

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