

# Opinion

## The price we paid for freedom

It's strange how history repeats itself.

While doing some research on VE Day, I came across a newspaper from Thursday, May 10, 1945. Of course, the banner headline was about the end of the Second World War. But just off to the side was the news that four candidates had thrown their hats into the race for the York East seat in the upcoming provincial election.

Fifty years later, we're celebrating the anniversary of VE Day and preparing for a provincial election.

For me it was a strong reminder of the importance of democracy and the price we've paid to maintain it.

Unfortunately, it's a subject far too many of us tend to ignore.

I'm hoping the VE Day cele-



Viewpoint

Alan Shackleton

brations scheduled locally for today and on Monday, May 8 (the actual date of the end of the war in Europe) will make those who take our freedom for granted stop and reflect on its precious nature and the sacrifices made to achieve it.

With the provincial election on June 8 we once again have the right to vote for the candidate of our choice and have a say in the government we get.

It's a right people died for. I can't stand to hear people say

they don't vote in elections. Sure, they have all kinds of excuses, usually along the lines of "All politicians are the same," "I don't know enough about the candidates," "One vote doesn't make a difference."

What do people want from democracy? Would they prefer a dictatorship, it's not as much work. God forbid they might actually have to pick up a newspaper, go to an all-candidates meeting or brave the elements in early June to vote.

People get the government they deserve. And guess what? If you didn't vote, it's your fault. The people who got out there and cast a ballot, they have the right to complain. The people who didn't vote, they should just shut their mouths and pay their taxes.

Voter turnout in municipal elections averages around 35 per cent. In provincial and federal elections it is usually the 65- to 75-per cent range.

In the 1990 provincial election, voter turnout in the Durham-York riding was 61.8 per cent. I think we can do better.

I hope all of the eligible voters out there remember that this election takes place 51 years and two days after D-Day, June 6, 1944. We dishonor those who gave their lives on the beaches of Normandy, and in every aspect of both the First and Second World Wars, when we decide not to vote.

VE Day meant not only the end of the war but the continuation of our freedoms. We should try harder to respect those freedoms.

## Ready for the next mania?

Back in the 17th century, the Dutch went nuts over tulip bulbs. Merchants, soldiers, peasants, nobility — virtually everyone in Holland unaccountably decided that they must get in on the tulip bulb trade.

One burgher in Amsterdam offered two wagons of wheat, four wagonloads of rye, four fat oxen, eight pigs, a dozen sheep, two barrels of wine, four barrels of beer, two barrels of butter, 1,000 pounds of cheese, a bed, a new suit of clothes and a silver beaker.

And for what? For a single tulip bulb. Many Dutch traded away their farms, their houses, everything they owned for the chance to possess some rare tulip bulb or other. The madness spread like wildfire until 1637, when panic swept the bulb collectors. Suddenly everybody wanted to sell and nobody wanted to buy. The world's one and only outbreak of Tulipomania was over.

But you never know when a mass mania will come along and gobble us up. In our grandparents' time the arrival of Halley's Comet was enough to convince thousands that the world was coming to an end. They left their homes and jobs and went up the nearest mountain to await Armageddon.

In the 1930s, Orson Welles convinced tens of thousands of gullible American radio listeners that Martians had landed and were taking over the U.S.

Back in the '60s, hundreds of thousands of teeny boppers flocked like mayflies to the rhythm of four shaggy lads from Liverpool.

I think I've spotted the next fad on the Mania Turnpike. I believe we are trembling on the threshold of a historical period that will become known to future anthropologists as The Age of PeeCeemania. P.C. Political Correctness. It's a movement that's been with us for a few years. A movement that should by now have perished from

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## ADAM

by Brian Basset



Basic Black

Arthur Black

its own absurdity, but it hasn't. It's getting stronger.

Witness these tales culled from the news wires this past little while.

ITEM: Hostess Frito-Lay Canada Ltd. has jettisoned a \$4 million ad campaign to introduce a new potato chip bag. Reason? The headline on the ad read "Kiss The Old Bag Goodbye." Some professional whiner in Toronto decried the ad as "appalling and profoundly anti-woman." Hostess Frito-Lay caved in and yanked the ad. All I can say is: what a crock of chips.

ITEM: The University of Toronto has pulled an edition of the campus newspaper off the newsstands, in response to complaints from students, women and the Masonic Lodge.

The student newspaper was a spoof of the Toronto Sun (how do you spoof the Toronto Sun?) which included an article about how the Masonic Lodge was plotting to take over the university by spiking cafeteria food with emetics. An official claimed the spoof "had gone beyond the boundaries of normally accepted humor of the college community."

Will the lunacy never end? Who knows? But at least it's begun to turn back on itself.

At the University of Pennsylvania recently a woman was kicked out of a meeting of a group called "White Women Against Racism."

Reason? Well, the woman was black, you see, and the members of the WWAR Committee felt her presence would make white women uncomfortable.

Gee. Isn't that the same argument Governor George Wallace used?