

Comment & Opinions

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Send your letters
to the editor
to the address below

EDITORIAL

Please remember to vote on Monday

Monday is election day. The Tribune is not going to tell you how to vote, that's your decision. We are, however, going to tell you to vote. The 1994 municipal election saw about 30 per cent of the eligible voters turn out to cast a ballot. That's appalling. Come on people, surely we can do better than that this time around. For those who think it's a waste of time to vote, especially in municipal elections, please think again. This is the level of government that is closest to you. It's also the level at which you can make yourself heard. This newspaper hears almost endless complaining about things which happen in the town. People are upset about a host of problems. Obviously they care about what's going on in the town. However, when it comes time to vote and actually make a step towards doing something, many of these people fall strangely quiet. Voting is a privilege. There are a lot of countries in the world where democratic rights are non-existent. We, on the other hand, are blessed to live a free country. Don't forget, though, that this freedom came at a very high price. It's appropriate that this election takes place the day before Remembrance Day. People gave their lives so you can vote on Monday. Please use your privilege.



'Designer water' selling like hotcakes

*All day I face
The barren waste
And crave the taste
Of water.
Coooooooooooooooooool
Water.*

Old song lyric

Some day, thousands of years from now, anthropologists from a distant galaxy will come to Earth to study the fossilized traces of the human population that once thrived here. And they're going to be mystified. Not by the hulking relics of our skyscrapers. Not by what's left of our libraries or our computers or our cracked and crumbling superhighway systems. No...it's the water bottle empties that will drive them nuts. They're made of plastic, for starters. That means they'll probably still be around thousands of years from now. Our garbage dumps and landfill sites ('middens' the arche-

ologists will call them) — will be riddled and infested with empty water containers — Evian, Perrier, Canada Glacier, Pelligrino and several dozen other brand names. And the alien archeologists won't be able to figure out why. Religious artifact? Fetish symbol? Primitive form of currency? Advanced chemical analysis will reveal that all the bottles ever contained was water. Why would a civilization (even one as barbarous as the human one) carry around containers full of the cheapest, most plentiful substance on the planet? A substance that was readily available from lakes, rivers, wells, fire hydrants — even hot and col running faucets in each and every domestic household? It's not hard to figure out why folks in Beirut or Acapulco or even Paris buy bottled water. The stuff that comes out of their taps is undrinkable. I even understand why people in Toronto drink bottled water. (The stuff that comes out of Toronto taps is safe to drink — but it



Basic
Black

Arthur Black

tastes like it was piped in from the shallow end of the swimmingpool). Similarly I can understand why folks in Winnipeg were snapping up cases of bottled water during and after the horrible spring floods they lived through last spring. What I don't fully understand is how companies like Evian, Perrier and Canada Glacier can make a living selling water to the other 95 percent of Canadians, the vast majority of whom have perfectly good drinking water in their kitchens, their bathrooms — hell, even in their washing machines. Is spring water better than tap water? There's no guarantee. Springs can be as easily contaminated as any other ground water. Besides, who says the

stuff you paid a couple of bucks for ever saw a spring? It wasn't until last year that US authorities got around to regulating the term "spring water". Until then, any entrepreneur could drain dump truck radiators into bottle and sell it legally over the counter as Honest Fred's Pure Spring Water. Since 1996, anything labelled "spring water" must actually come from a spring.

One giant step for mankind. No, the truth is Designer Water is selling like hotcakes because a handful of Hollywood types like Pamela Anderson Lee, Tom Cruise and Melanie Griffiths have appeared in public clutching their Designer Water bottles the way Linus clutches his security blanket. This has made it chic and trendy to be seen in public sucking on a bottle of water. Indeed some Yupoid types won't leave home without it.

I hate to be the one to tell them they've been had...so I'll let the New York Times do it.

A couple of months ago, The Times ran an expose that showed more than a third of all bottled water sold in the US is merely filtered tap water. In other hustlers are selling water for a dollar a quart that costs them 1/10th of a cent to draw from their tap.

Even P.T. Barnum never figured out a scam that brazen.

The Times further reports that several American cities, including Houston, Texas, are finalizing plans to put their municipal water in plastic bottles and sell it up on the shelves right alongside the expensive, exotic brands.

They figure if people are dumb enough to pay for a substance they can get for free, then the municipal coffers might as well see some of the action too.

After all, it doesn't take a genius to figure out what Evian spells backwards.

This strike not about school; it's about power

Dear Editor,
Thank you teachers for your efforts on behalf of the students of this province. The removal of teacher services would not have been necessary if the public had mounted a serious protest against this government. Unfortunately Premier Harris has been and is continuing to misinform the public about the main issues in this dispute. Standardized testing, standardized reports, more parental involvement are not issues in this strike. Teacher preparation time is not a main issue although it is an important issue to secondary teachers

because students receive individual assistance in this period.

Power is a main issue. Should virtually all decision-making functions be removed from local boards and placed in the hands of the Cabinet, not even the Legislature? Bill 160 does this.

The other main issue is funding. Can removing a billion dollars more from our educational funding be in the best interests of our students? Premier Harris asks teachers to put students first. Is he putting students first with cuts of this magnitude?

Our oh so pious Premier is now condemning teachers for their "law-

LETTER

lessness" in having the courage to protest government policies. Did he expect teachers to twiddle their thumbs and say "oh dear?" People have a right, and at times, even a duty to protest.

Teachers, I applaud you for your courage, determination and willingness to accept the high emotional and considerable financial costs of your actions.

Bruce Johnston

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