

On the street

Bryan Eneas asked people at Loyalist College the following question:

Because of low gas prices, are you still going out to Tyendinaga to fill your vehicle?



Sandy Marchand, 24, customs and border services, "Yes, I still go to Tyendinaga to put gas in. The guys out there, they give the best service, they're always smiling."



Sonya Dronsfield, 21, Loyalist grad, "I've only been out to Tyendinaga twice in the past three years to put gas in my car."



Mitchell Thomson, 18, media experience, "I pretty much stay in Belleville to fuel up. It's just easier for me to do that because it's closer."



Sam Proctor, 19, architectural technology, "I still go out to Tyendinaga every week to fill up my truck. I go there anytime I need to fill it up."



Jocelyn Sippola, 23, business administration, "I haven't put gas in my car out in Tyendinaga recently. I usually fill up anytime I pass through there. I just haven't gone out that way in a bit."



Jake Scully, architectural technology, "Because gas is so cheap in town, I don't feel the need to waste my time or money just to get gas out at Tyendinaga."

Editorial

Is the war on drugs a losing game?

Since the 1970s, the global war on drugs has led to unprecedented numbers of incarcerated people either suffering from drug addiction, or charged with possession.

An estimated 1.5 billion people were arrested in the United States last year and most for drug possession.

With drug possession comes the stigma of being a drug addict and with a stigma comes huge prejudice from all areas of society, including and most especially, from the health-care system.

Drug addiction is not a crime: it is a mental health issue.

The sad truth is that most health centres in Canada and the U.S. will turn away drug addicts, claiming there is nothing they can do for their addictions.

"They just need to start to get their lives together and become a real member of society," is a common argument among some of the general public.

But what if, as a society, we collectively stopped blaming the drug addicts for their addictions? Let's stop reprimanding the ones who need help and start treating drug addiction for what it is: a health issue.

Donald MacPherson, director of the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, an organization with the goal of advancing improvements to Canadian drug policy, says a shift in the way we think about drug addiction is key to solving the problem.

"Canada unfortunately continues to head backwards in the drug policy arena with the introduction of mandatory minimums for low-level drug offences, which will make it more difficult for cities to implement supervised injection sites," MacPherson writes in a posting on his website.

If Canada refuses to engage in the global discussion about alternatives to the war on drugs or consideration of decriminalization, we will watch the world speed ahead with progress while policy makers are still blindly discussing sanctions in a losing game.

Breaking the stigma of drug addiction should be the war we wage.

The cycle of drug addiction is to blame, not the addicts themselves.

In many cases, poor mental health leads to seeking comfort in drug use. The need for a fix results in the need for money, which can in turn result in crime for some drug addicts, according to a 2012 Statistics Canada report.

The issue of drug addiction does not begin and end with crime. It stems from the lack of correct mental health care for struggling individuals.

Canada needs to join the international shift in drug policy and social inclusion for drug addicts rather than employ the wasteful tactics of an invisible war.

Instead of a culture of fear, let's collectively, as a society, promote a culture of care.

Hannah Eden

Safe drinking water a right for everyone

Canada is failing many First Nations peoples by not providing universal access to safe drinking water.

Even though the construction of the new water treatment plant on the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory is finally coming into fruition, not everyone on the reserve will have access to safe drinking water. An additional \$40 million is required to put water into the whole community, according to Tyendinaga Chief R. Donald Maracle.

Clean water is the most essential and fundamental human right. For First Nations communities, it's a cultural necessity as much as it is a physical one. It's an inherent First Nations right to fish, hunt and trap.

According to the Health Canada website, the federal budgets of 2008 and 2010 each included \$330.8 million over two years (\$54.8 million for Health Canada) for the First Nations Water and Wastewater Action Plan. The Economic Action Plan 2012 extended the 2010 commitment until March 2014.

However, according to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 73 per cent of First Nations water systems are at high or medium risk of contamination. Close to 120 communities are on boil-water advisories.

In recent news, the federal government has classified Winnipeg as one of the worst places for First Nations people to live in Canada following the boil-water advisory issued on Jan. 22.

The water crisis on reserves is an acute and critical situation.

The issue is definitely not about money, and it is certainly not about technology. The issue is about the right to safe water. It is about the responsibility of the federal government to ensure everyone has access to clean drinking water.

The federal government has taken responsibility over First Nations and reserves. At the beginning, the First Nations agreed to share their natural resources and water through co-existence with the Europeans.

That's when treaties were formed and the First Nations Trust Fund was created. It's a sizeable amount of monies that accumulates a sizeable interest, which is set aside and held by the federal government for the benefit of First Nations peoples.

Unfortunately, those treaties were and are broken.

We only need to look at history to know how committed the Canadian government is.

It's a history of colonialism and environmental discrimination. First Nations were pushed and isolated to areas they have not chosen, away from their sources of water. Unlike most of Canada, in most cases, reserves have to rely on ground or surface water sources. Both are extremely vulnerable to pollution from agricultural or industrial contaminants. Communities were diminished through the residential school system, and First Nations were instead confined to small areas where they were not able to live a sustainable or traditional way of life.

Yet we cannot look only into the past.

First Nations are entitled to clean drinking water as much as anyone else.

The federal government should honour signed treaties and bear the responsibility to implement policies to enhance the capacity of First Nations to manage their own resources to build proper infrastructure and education systems.

Continuous funding and support will bring about a strong economic environment, and only then, can growth be achieved.

Future generations will have better opportunities, better jobs and proper training to bring social and economic justice back to their communities.

It is the right thing to do.

Annie Sakkab



Opinion

Gluten free becoming a trendy choice

Few people diagnosed with celiac disease, yet many choosing to remove wheat from diet

By Joel Watson

With the many health foods that are out in the world, gluten-free has to be one of the most unnecessary and expensive lifestyle choices a person can participate in.

Gluten-free products have previously only existed for people who have celiac disease. This disease is a digestive disorder in the nutrient absorbing part of your gut, also known as the small intestine.

According to the Canadian Digestive

Health Foundation, approximately 110,000 people have been diagnosed with celiac disease. That's not even one per cent of Canada's population.

However, up until about a decade ago, the other 99 per cent didn't even seem to care whether or not they were eating products containing gluten.

This seemed to stop when people such as Dr. William Davis, the author of the popular book *Wheat Belly*, started to suggest that gluten found in whole grains is the root of many weight problems.

Now, more and more people are trying to cut gluten out of their diets. It doesn't make a difference for your health, but it will certainly make a difference in your bank account.

Gluten-free products costs are usually 2.5 times more expensive than regular food items. So why would you be spend-

ing more money on specialty goods when it does nothing to benefit you?

In fact, the gluten-free food industry, according to the consumer research firm Mintel, made an estimated \$8.8 billion in the United States last year.

On top of that, many of the gluten-free products you see on the shelf are almost absolute garbage for you. If you compare a gluten-free frozen pizza to a regular frozen pizza they're both incredibly high in calories, fat and carbohydrates, but you're paying almost three times as much money for the so-called gluten-free benefit.

Eating healthy food and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is incredibly important for everybody, but people need to stop looking for the gluten-free stamp and start looking at the nutrition facts.

It will make your body thinner and your wallet fatter.

Cities placing ban on winter fun

Kids need to get out and enjoy the outdoors on toboggan hills and rinks

By Sarra Lalonde

Between banning tobogganing and making a fuss over backyard rinks, they might as well cancel Christmas for kids.

All the fun winter activities should stay. Growing up, I went tobogganing, I went skating on backyard rinks, and I played outside. I was being active and I was having fun. Today, you see kids playing on

their cellphones, gaming systems and on computers.

With cities such as Hamilton banning tobogganing and Cornwall making a fuss about backyard rinks, more and more kids will not be outdoors having fun.

I know that there are the "dangers" of tobogganing and skating, but let's get realistic here. There are dangers with everything you do. You probably did all these things as a kid; now ask yourself, did you have fun? Your answer is probably yes, so why take that fun and excitement away from the next generations?

Across Canada many places have either banned or have had some sort of smack-

down on winter activities. There is nothing wrong with going out and having fun, being active and enjoying your childhood, or showing your kids how you enjoyed your childhood.

As long as you have rules and bylaws, you should be able to enjoy the winter activities.

Fence off areas that are not allowed to be used for tobogganing and set certain times for the rinks. This way there are no problems.

So ask yourself this: would you want to cancel Christmas for children? Your answer is probably no, so don't take away the activities they enjoy.

The Pioneer

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