

LETTERS

Making sense of Ford's win

I must assume that Doug Ford's supporters don't have children in the crumbling public school system. At my poll, the ceiling was leaking and a large garbage can was filling up.

I would love to know their secret for staying healthy so they can avoid the maxed-out health-care system. I also will assume they have no vulnerable relatives or people in their lives so it's of no consequence to them regarding renovations and living below the poverty line.

I will assume they have the means to pay ridiculous out-of-touch tax increases annually while the province downloads its responsibility onto municipalities.

I tell my niece, who is an emergency room pediatrician in Vancouver, to not come back to Ontario as she will not be valued.

To all those who stayed home during the election, your apathy will affect everyone.

Robin Magder, Dundas

Good to see young voters at poll

I recently worked as a deputy returning officer at Canadian Martyrs school. The neighbourhood is home to many McMaster students. This location had a large turnout of students wanting to vote. It was heartwarming to see so many engaged young people.

Most of the students had to be added to the voters list, which resulted in a large lineup and long wait times. The students were patient and kind, even after waiting in line for over an hour.

Much is said about the "entitlement" of this generation — however, that was not my experience at all. I think we can all learn a lesson from these young folks who appreciate and understand what a privilege it is to have a right to vote in an election.

Angela Morgan, Hamilton

Electorate fails to stand up

I am amazed at the electorate's seemingly pathological inability to stand up to Doug Ford despite his disastrous leadership.

More perplexing that only about 45 per cent of eligible voters turned out. Albeit we have encountered some hurdles — a snap election, the weather and, sadly, apathy.

Ross Prince, Hamilton

Thanks to all the candidates

This February morning after Ontario's provincial election, Elections Ontario shows about 292,000 more people voting than in June 2022. That is encouraging.

Political candidacy is hard. Citizen voters and those not yet old enough often forget or don't yet know how arduous that commitment can be and is. I watched the broadcast of the candidates' debate for my Hamilton-Centre riding.

This may not apply always nor everywhere, but all four candidates — with Doug Ford's Progressive Conservative candidate absent — participated vigorously and knowledgeably. All were well prepared, their arguments well-presented.

We should offer gratitude and respect to those who take up this often exhausting, personally expensive, invigorating candidacy challenge.

Shea Hoffnitz, Hamilton

Voter apathy 'quite disgusting'

An estimated 55 per cent of eligible voters turned their back on the election process here in Ontario.

Regrettably, everyone will feel the effects of the Progressive Conservative party turning their political backs when they continue to ignore hallway health care, 24-hour wait times in hospital emergency rooms, apartment rental rates escalating and the escalating problem of food affordability.

The apathy of the non-voting majority is quite disgusting, but I have no doubt that this message will be similarly ignored by this group until they get sick or try to find an affordable apartment or have to decide on whether to pay rent or buy groceries. Sorry, but by that time, it's too late.

Jim Gilliaty, Ancaster

Didn't vote? Shame on you

Kudos to Doug Ford a.k.a. "Captain Canada" on his election win. His strategy of an unnecessary snap winter election at a cost of \$189 million to Ontario taxpayers was a success. To the 54.5 per cent of Ontarians who did not cast a ballot, shame on you.

Mary Elizabeth Toth, Ancaster

What a waste of money

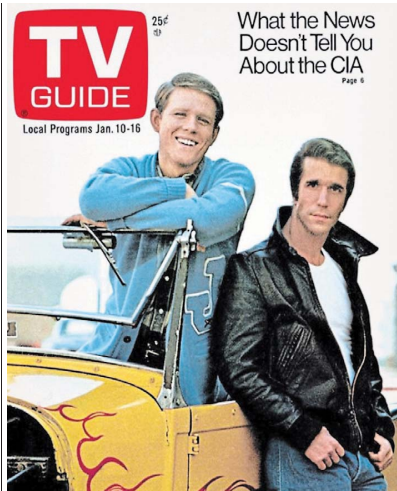
What a wasteful election. About \$189 million for this unnecessary and unprecedented winter election, all of which could have helped our health-care and education system, provided affordable housing and helped address homelessness. Ontarians have been hoodwinked again.

Doug Miller, Hagersville



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Ron Howard, left, and Henry Winkler on the cover of TV Guide in 1976. Writing for Howard's birthday, today, Thomas Froese notes the former "Happy Days" actors are "a study in real-life contrasts."

You need not be a star to tell your story



THOMAS FROESE
OPINION

The fun fact for today, March 1, is that it's Ron Howard's birthday.

You may know Howard for directing some fine movies.

"Apollo 13," "A Beautiful Mind" and "Frost/Nixon," are a few that come to mind. Way back, he was Opie from "The Andy Griffith Show."

But for anyone still loving the '70s, he's clean-cut Richie Cunningham from "Happy Days."

On Tuesday nights at 8 o'clock, that show, which idealized 1950s suburban America, brought viewing teens so much joy that you'd never feel guilty for loving it way more than, say, your sister. It was fun and had a way of putting value on family and friends. It ran from 1974 to 1984.

"Happy Days" had successful spinoffs. Another fun fact is that Robin Williams had his first TV appear-

ance on one episode. He was the alien Mork, wanting to take Richie to his planet Ork as an example of an "average humdrum human." Richie was juxtaposed against the uber-cool Arthur Fonzarelli, the Fonz, played by Henry Winkler in that patinated leather jacket.

Remember, in the '70s only a handful of TV stations existed. Screen culture was more uniform than now. More people talked about the same shows. So Richie, and especially Fonzie, had cultural influence. Interestingly enough, Howard and Winkler are a study in real-life contrasts.

Winkler, humanly speaking, never should have made it far. His German Jewish parents barely escaped Berlin for New York City in 1939, just under the wire of the Second World War. Winkler's extended family — aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents — were all murdered in the Holocaust.

In New York, he was completely hopeless in school because of dyslexia, basically ignored. Worse, Winkler's parents often berated him as "dummer Hund," that's

"dumb dog." (Note to parents. Don't do this.)

Winkler couldn't read. He survived by improvising, thus, eventually leading to acting.

Howard, meanwhile, grew up idolizing his even-keeled father, Rance, a steady mentor in Ron's acting life.

And Howard's mother, Jean, left such a positive mark on the family that Ron Howard's daughter, Bryce Dallas Howard, wrote, "My grandmother's vision and belief in what was possible for our family — as well as her joie de vivre — are what made it all possible."

Rance and Jean Howard, actors themselves, left Oklahoma for Hollywood in 1958 when Ron was 4. Before long, their boys (Ron's younger brother is Clint) outshone their parents' careers.

After their deaths, Ron noted his "shock of recognition" of the rich and strange journey of his parents.

"That made our journeys rich and strange too."

Howard's memoir, "The Boys," and Winkler's memoir, "Being Henry," explore more of these two fascinating lives.

Both books are on my bedside table these days, a reminder that the stories of celebrities — who are often quite embarrassed when idolized — and the stories of humdrum people aren't always that different.

Howard never even considered writing a memoir, but eventually took Tom Hanks' advice: "Well, if you ever do it, write about your childhood." The writing teachers say the same. Plug your nose and jump in. Write your memories as truthfully as you can. Writer Flannery O'Connor said anyone who's survived childhood has enough fodder to write the rest of their lives.

No, you need not be a star to tell your story.

My own father easily shared family history for hours at a time, but never recorded it, and made it hard for anyone else to try.

Conversely, my father-in-law, who wasn't a big storyteller, took time to write about his childhood and early family life. The simply-bound hardcovers given to family are now like gold.

This is it. Humdrum humans are the stuff that life is made of. Anyone's life. From anywhere. Don't let the memory of yours slip away. Get it down.

So Happy Birthday to Ron Howard. Thanks for sharing your memories. Appreciated as much as anything is your humility of spirit — it's a refreshing drink during some hot days of cultural narcissism.

THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM AND THOMASFROESE.SUBSTACK.COM

You're invited to help shape the future of local health care

TRACEY MACARTHUR

When I joined Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) as president and CEO last spring, my priority was to get to know this organization and the people it serves.

My family and I made Hamilton our home, and from the start, we've been warmly welcomed. What stands out most is the deep connection people have with HHS. Nearly everyone I meet — whether at work or in the community — has a personal story about our hospitals.

Some have spent their entire careers here, while others have trusted HHS with life's most important moments: births, recoveries, and final goodbyes.

HHS is more than just a hospital network — it's a part of everyday life in this city and plays an important role across Ontario.

We provide care for people at every stage of life, from pregnancy to end-of-life, and offer specialized services such as trauma, stroke, cancer, burns and pediatric care.

Our region is fortunate to have access to some of the most advanced treatments and medical expertise available. Beyond patient care, we are also one of Canada's top 10 research hospitals, helping to develop new treatments and improve health care across the country.

With this responsibility comes a duty to constantly improve. Our job is to provide the best care possible



HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCES PHOTO

Almost a decade ago, HHS launched a plan to modernize health care. A lot has been accomplished, despite the challenges of a global pandemic. Now it's time to set priorities for the years to come, says HHS president and CEO Tracey MacArthur.

while making smart use of resources. That's why we are creating a new vision for the future.

Almost a decade ago, HHS launched a plan to modernize health care, improving patient records, care quality, and hospital facilities. A lot has been accomplished — despite the challenges of a global pandemic.

Now, it's time to look ahead and set our priorities for the years to come. This plan will be shaped by the people who count on us — pa-

tients, families, health-care workers and community partners. Your experiences and ideas will help us make sure we're focusing on what matters most.

I invite you to be part of the conversation. Please visit hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/strategy to share your thoughts and help shape the future of health care in our region.

TRACEY MACARTHUR IS THE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCES.