



WATERLOO CHRONICLE <http://www.waterloochronicle.ca/opinions/article/196071>

Carefully consider fluoride question

RICK BEYERS, GUEST COLUMN

Published on Dec 02, 2009

Fluoride flap has infected me with councillor concern. Notwithstanding that "Waterloo (was) named the World's Top Intelligent Community" we seem to have trouble choosing elected representatives that understand and respect that intelligence.

In November 2003, following the RIM park financial debacle, not one member of the council including the mayor was re-elected. I suspect this was because this group suspended their critical judgement and hitched their wagon to a snake oil salesman; they failed to apply high school mathematics to the numbers and failed to apply common sense — "if it appears to be too good to be true..."

Alarming, it seems that the current council fails to appreciate that intelligence is the wise and beneficial application of knowledge and knowledge is acquired by the search for truth using a combination of the scientific method and careful observation. I'm sure that the academics, intellectuals, engineers and scientists in this community will support the truth that water fluoridation is a public health program worth supporting.

But the critical issue is the behaviour of some council members in relation to this matter. While each council member is entitled to his/her own personal opinion on communal water fluoridation, as representatives of this "intelligent" community they ought to be required to apply scientific evidence to their decision making.

The most worrisome behaviour of one councillor is the support for "denier" rants in the form used by climate change deniers today. By challenging the benefit of fluoridation and claiming wilful harm is being imposed on the community these rants deny the scientific rationality that is the essence of our progress and the essence of Waterloo.

Let's look at the history of fluoridation in Waterloo Region. On November 10, 1982 the Waterloo Chronicle banner read: "Courage" of the silent majority quashes bid to halt fluoridation.

Now 27 years later, with overwhelming evidence of benefit and none of harm, our current councillors have chosen to disregard the scientific truth and hold a plebiscite on discontinuing water fluoridation.

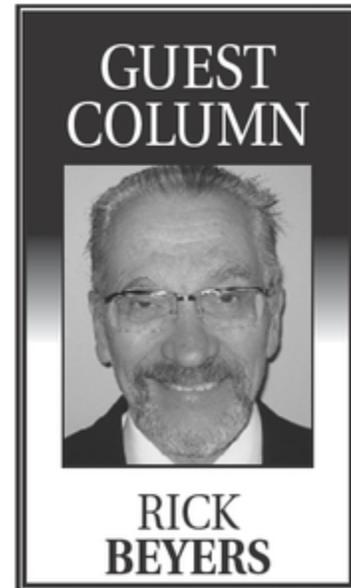
For newcomers to this controversy, allow me to position the matter. One would expect fluoridation to be as readily accepted as iodine is in salt or Vitamin D in milk. It emerged not from the laboratories of a pharmaceutical manufacturer; it was the result of observation of a natural phenomenon.

Communities such as Stratford had statistically lower rates of tooth decay. Analysis showed that their drinking water contained fluoride. So an experiment was established where three communities (including Brantford) added fluoride to their water and confirmed the benefits of fluoride.

In spite of the natural aspects of the process, fear of it is easy to generate due to the other uses of fluoride.

My challenge to you, the voters, is to use the one year remaining before the "big vote" to look at your councillors. You should take the necessary steps to rid yourself of councillors who replace the wisdom of experts and the value of careful observation with their own opinion.

After all, prevention provides the highest and best form of health care.



WATERLOOCHRONICLE .ca

<http://www.waterloochronicle.ca/opinions/article/196071>



© Copyright 2008 Metroland Media Group Ltd. All rights reserved. The reproduction, modification, distribution, transmission or republication of any material from this Metroland West Media Group website is strictly prohibited without the prior written permission of Metroland Media Group Ltd.

