

SAYOUT

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Ideas, Facts, and Opinions for Today

We Have Elections ... For What?

In the coming months we will have elections in Canada. Next year we'll have a big one — a federal election.

Elections are, of course, important. They're the major signifier of a true democracy working as it should. But wait, aren't elections meant to be meaningful as well? And isn't that meaning supposed to give action to what the majority of people really want?

Unfortunately, we now have a record of government after government being elected into office in this country, provincially or federally, and then not doing what the voters thought they'd been promised.

When politicians fail to carry out the very things people voted them into office to do, they've engaged in a fundamental betrayal. Then we have the politics of betrayal.

Once voters feel they'll end up betrayed no matter how they vote, they will lose their faith in the system. They'll no longer believe they live in a democracy.

When you speak with politicians during elections, make sure they respond specifically to your questions about what they will do if elected. Be a nuisance if need be to get clear answers. People might be annoyed. But that too is part of a thriving democracy.

Elections need to count for something, and that something should be politicians keeping their promises. Anything less than that is a fundamental breach of faith with the electorate — with you.

A Touch of Praise

When someone does something for you, be sure to give them a bit of praise. A simple thank you will often do.

Too many people accept things being done for them without giving a word of thanks.

Make sure you praise people now and then for the things they do.

Sometimes you might even use the words, "Good job!"

Challenging corporate rule

"Corporate rule must be challenged in order to revive the values and practices it contradicts: democracy, social justice, equality, and compassion. The corporation and its underlying ideology are animated by a narrow conception of human nature that is too distorted and too uninspiring to have lasting purchase on our political imaginations."

Joel Bakan
The Corporation

A chosen economic framework

"The governments of our democracies have chosen an economic framework for globalization that has actually tied the hands of those democracies."

Joseph E. Stiglitz
The Price of Inequality



Long Ago Down on the Farm

Social Entrepreneurship

What is "social entrepreneurship"? Basically, it's any idea that is put to work in a community for the benefit of that community. It is independent of the government or corporate sectors. Food banks are an example of social entrepreneurship in action. "Habitat for Humanity" is another

They don't focus on money-making or profit enhancement, although they do need to figure out ways of bringing in money to keep things going. In many ways they help communities help themselves.

Social entrepreneurs don't have all the answers, but they can help their communities in many unexpected and beneficial ways. They add value to a community along with a healthy touch of compassion.

Bothering to know

"If you can't be bothered to know what is going on, you have no right to complain."

Margaret Heffernan
Willful Blindness

One-Party State?

Noam Chomsky has said that the United States is a one-party state. Even though two main parties exist, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, he says it is really governed only by the 'Business' Party. This one party adheres solely to the neoliberal ideology — free enterprise and less government provide the solution to everything.

For us in Canada, the question is: *Do we have the same situation here?*

Elizabeth May, leader of the federal Green Party has declared herself "pro-market". Tom Mulcair, leader of the federal NDP, has come out against a 'wealth tax'. Are these two leaders really members of the Business Party in Canada?

Do we have a one-party government in Canada? Is this why so many people just don't bother voting?

What do you think?

Sayout

Sayout gives voice to those concerned about where we are and where we're headed. Here we can talk about issues affecting us right now—in Canada and around the world.

Agree or disagree, but think. What is really happening, and what do we need to do? Ask questions of those in power, demand action where it's needed, and don't be misled by saccharine promises or golden phrases meant to soothe, but nothing more..

E-versions of this newsletter are available for free. You just have to ask. No selling, no hassles!

Contact Robyn Peterson at:

**How hot will it be?****Hot in Chicago**

What if our atmosphere really is warming up? If that's the case, *What should we do about it?*

If we think in terms of prudence or insurance, perhaps we should consider things we might do now that would serve us better in a hotter world.

We don't need to break the bank, but we might be able to adjust a few things at modest cost to prepare ourselves.

The city of Chicago has come up with a plan for that city to cope with hotter weather conditions. This plan includes these points:

1. Manage Heat.
2. Pursue Innovative Cooling.
3. Protect Air Quality.
4. Manage Stormwater.
5. Implement Green Urban Design.
6. Preserve Our Plants and Trees.
7. Engage the Public.
8. Engage Businesses.
9. Plan for the Future.

In 1995 Chicago suffered a heat wave that killed 739 people. That was more than twice the death toll from the infamous Chicago fire of 1871. The windy city knows something about the dire effects of too much heat.

Will other cities wait until they have major heat disasters before taking steps to cope with a hotter future?

Let us hope wisdom prevails.

Would You Like to Ponzi?

Early in the 20th-century a young Italian came to the New World. He settled first in Montreal and then moved to the United States. He learned a lot about financial matters and, for a time, worked as a bank manager in Montreal.



Carlo Ponzi gradually worked out an investment scheme based on different international valuations of postage stamps. He invited people to invest in his scheme, promising them very high returns on their money.

Critically, Ponzi's scheme depended on a continuing flow of new investors. Money from new investors was needed to pay lavish returns to earlier investors. Inevitably, early in the 1920s he could not attract enough new investors to keep his scheme going. In the end, he was prosecuted and jailed for large-scale fraud.

In today's world we have massive financial investments, debts, and insurance provisions of various types piled up on each other. Many trillions of dollars are involved. We're told that we must continue to grow to provide more and more investment coming in to keep the whole pile going.

Is it possible that the ghost of Carlo Ponzi is hidden in there somewhere, smiling in knowing delight?

Inverted Morality at Work

"The offshore world is steeped in a pervasive inverted morality: Turning a blind eye to crime and corruption has become good business practice: a way of attracting money; while alerting forces of law and order to wrong-doing has become the punishable offence. Here rugged individualism morphed into a disregard, even contempt, for democracy and for societies at large."

Nicholas Shaxson
Treasure Islands