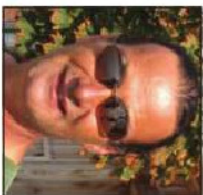


Opinion

Who will you be voting for in the upcoming provincial election?



Dan Koop

"I'll probably be voting for Tim Haddock. He's local and a good guy."



Joanne and granddaughter Emily Davis

"I'll be voting PC, for Tim Haddock."



Michael Rozander

"It's time for change- I'll be voting PC."



Gertanne Mollitor

"They all cause more problems. They ask us to conserve and they hire more people they don't need."

One act of community service can result in more

Don't tell Lisa Sellman that one person can't make a difference. She knows better.

Sellman, a community activist and lifelong volunteer, recently learned how one act of kindness can set off a chain reaction that can span the globe.

"I just started out with me asking a regional pet food company for a donation of dog food for Red Lake Rosies in Minnesota," said Sellman, a professional dog trainer and owner of a pet care business. "I called Solid Gold Northland, and one of the marketing managers there advised me that they were trying to increase the number of people who 'liked' them on Facebook, and that if I could get 40

new Facebook members to click on their 'like' button, they'd give me \$200 worth of pet food."

So Sellman, who currently volunteers for six different community groups, sent a message out to all her Facebook friends inviting them to Solid Gold Northland's fan page on Facebook. Somehow, the invite made it to the Facebook page of The Patrick Miracle, a page devoted to the story of a two year old pitbull found by a janitor in a dumpster. Their Facebook page has charted over 109,000 "like" clicks from users. When the founders of the page posted Sellman's invite, Solid Gold Northland received more than 2,000 new fans from all

over the world in the course of about 48 hours.

"When I contacted them the next week, they were blown away by how quickly the response took off," said Sellman, also author of the children's book *The Legend of the Wolves of Gunflint Lake* (www.dreamcatcherpress.us), which contains the theme of the value of community service and which she hopes will serve to inspire others. As a result of the combined outreach, Solid Gold Northland and Chuck and Don's Pet Food Outlet have committed a donation of \$2,000 worth of pet food, and I've helped to forge new friends from other countries who all care about the same things I care about. And it all started with a simple posting on Facebook because I wanted to help a local animal shelter. It's been magical."

Sellman's simple act was a drop in the bucket compared to her schedule of volunteer activities. She works as an after school care volunteer at the Minneapolis Indian Center, a special events assistant at the Loft Literary Center, a volunteer marketing director for canine events at the Gunflint Lodge (the real location contained in her children's book), and a trail staff assistant with Wilderness Inquiry, where she and her husband take disabled children and adults on outdoor adventures throughout the US. They've been volunteers

MRSA infections: razor blades on the floor



**W. Gifford-Jones M.D.
The Doctor Game**

MRSA infections are usually transferred through small open cuts or wounds. But there may not be any significant warning sign of infection. For some people the symptoms can resemble the flu, associated with mild fever. Others develop a rash or a large pimple, which increases in size, becomes painful and produces pus and if the infection enters the bloodstream it can be fatal. So seek medical attention if there's any doubt.

What about a dip in the club's swimming pool? The majority of health club pools are well supervised and tested for bacterial contamination. But outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness due to bacteria and viral infections can occur if hygienic standards are not followed.

For instance, the U.S. Center for Disease Control reported in May 2010 that 3,666 health clubs in 13 US states were inspected by health authorities. This

resulted in closure of 10 percent of the health club pools. Inadequate circulation, poor filtration systems and family disinfection procedures were the main problems. One wonders how many people use the bathroom, fail to wash their hands, and then enter the pool.

Don't forget to wear adequate eye protection if you're playing tennis, squash and racquetball. North Americans suffer about 45,000 eye injuries a year during recreational activities. It's not surprising that catastrophic injuries occur, sometimes causing blindness, when balls strike the eye at a speed of from 50 to 110 miles an hour.

Remember too that if you place too much on the camel's back it eventually lies down. The same event can happen to muscles and tendons. It can occur even if you are working with a professional trainer.

One of my 60 year old patients decided it was time to get in shape. She hired a trainer as a precaution. This is usually a prudent move. But at each visit to my office she confided with pride that more and more weights were being added each week to her leg exercises. I thought she was pushing her luck at her age and advised her that overwork and too much weight might cause injury. It did. She was left with permanent muscle damage that made walking more difficult.

Before joining a health club, see your doctor for a checkup, particularly if you suffer from risk factors such as heart disease, asthma, other chronic conditions and are no longer 16 years of age. Then enjoy, but watch for razor blades in showers.

So you've decided to get into shape and join the local health club? No one can fault that idea. But remember, there are prizes and minuses to most things in life, including health clubs, that result in unintended consequences.

Health clubs by necessity have a large number of hot, perspiring, less than clean bodies. So you don't need to be an infectious disease specialist to know there's potential infection everywhere. This means that precautionary measures must be taken seriously by the health club, its clients and, particularly, you.

It's hard to decipher the brains of some people. For instance, a female patient of mine stopped going to a fitness center in downtown Toronto. She was tired of repeatedly finding used razor blades on the floor of the shower. This was an expensive upscale club used by the so-called elite of the city! Mother should have taught them better.

But the big problem today is the possibility of contracting a staphylococ-

cus infection, particularly a methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus bacteria. MRSA staph infections are usually picked up by exposure to dirty towels, mats and gym equipment. A lack of individual hygiene often triggers these infections.

For instance, my female patient passed along another hygienic tidbit to me. She informed me that few of the women at the club bothered to wipe off equipment after using it. It's the old story "let someone else do it." So never assume it's been done. Good sense also means placing a towel over mats, never sharing towels and washing hands often with an alcohol-based spray or wipe.

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