

City's tap water beats bottled water

World Water Day marked by Welland Conservation Committee

Posted By DEREK SWARTZ

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Tribune Staff

WELLAND

More than one billion people in the world do not have clean drinking water.

In Canada the vast majority of the population has clean, safe drinking water piped directly in to their homes. But many people opt to pay about \$2 a litre to buy bottled water.

And to add to the cruel irony, most of that bottled water is derived from municipal sources, says Welland conservation committee member Giulia Forsythe.

Members of the committee were at Seaway Mall Saturday to spread the word about World Water Day. The United Nations-sanctioned day is intended to focus attention on its position that access to clean water is a basic human right.

For the chair of the city's conservation committee, choosing bottled water makes little sense. "For the same money the city will sell you 2,000 litres from your tap, and that includes sewer charges," Ward 3 Coun. Paul Grenier said.

The committee conducted a water taste test, putting the city's water up against a bottled water. Early on the numbers were clearly in support of tap water, with 10 of 11 tasters picking the water that flows straight out of the tap over the far more expensive bottled water.

The committee was screening a number of documentary films on water issues, and the Jean Vanier environmental club was signing people up for next weekend's Earth Hour, where residents, governments and businesses will shut off their lights for an hour on Saturday night.

The Niagara chapter of the Council of Canadians was also on hand.

The city's conservation committee offered information on the city's programs to support water conservation. The city offers rebates for residents who purchase low-flow toilets and energy-efficient washing machines.

It offers rain barrels for people who use a lot of water in their gardens, and is now offering water audits to homeowners interested in reducing their consumption.

Coun. David Alexander also attended. He says Welland should try to become a leader among Canadian municipalities when it comes to energy efficient building practices.

"That's the way the market is going. We're probably going to see higher energy prices so it just makes sense to build more energy-efficient homes," he says.

There are numerous small changes people can make that add up to a lot of conservation – things as easy as turning down the temperature on their water heaters to as ambitious as installing new windows which pay for themselves over time through energy savings.

dswartz@wellandtribune.ca

