

Editorial Writing

Regional Meet • 2000



You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School. From the given information, write an **editorial** as you would for the high school newspaper. Remember that as an editorial writer you should support or oppose **policy or action**; you should not sermonize.

You have **45 minutes**.

Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or entry. **Put your number in the upper right corner of each page of your entry.**

The popularity of bottled water has increased ninefold in the last two decades according to the International Bottled Water Association, and Leaguetown High School, a school of 844 in the Rio Grande Valley, is no different. Four bottled water machines have been installed in the school since spring break. Since the machines were installed, officials have had to fill them daily. Cost of the bottled water is \$1.25 per 20 ounce bottle.

Because of the popularity of bottled water, sales of soft drinks have dropped dramatically. Before the installation of the water machines, officials had to fill the soft drink machines daily. Now, the machines have to be filled twice a week. The district has decided to take out the soft drink machines at the end of the school year and offer only bottled water or juices beginning next year. Soft drinks cost \$1 for a 20 ounce bottle. Juices sold now cost \$1.25 per 12 ounce can, and school officials said that cost will not change.

Teachers have created a committee to protest the elimination of the soft drink machines. Two years ago the administration eliminated coffee from the campus, and now teachers are seeing their only other source of caffeinated beverage, soft drinks, being eliminated, also. That committee will meet with the school board April 21.

You are writing for the next issue of the *Press*, to be published Friday, April 16.

■ Those for eliminating the soft drink machines

Water is a much healthier source of liquid than soft drinks or coffee. It is easier to clean water if it is spilled, and water does not leave a stain. The American Health Association has recommended that people drink at least eight glasses of water a day to replace that water.

■ Those for keeping the soft drink machines in place

People who attend the school either to work or learn should have available to them an option of drinks and food. Water will cost more than the soft drinks, and water can be found free from the many water fountains throughout the school. Bottling water does not guarantee 100 percent purity.

■ JESSIE BRADSHAW, home economics teacher

"Water is much healthier than soft drinks. Also, it doesn't take as much effort to clean it up if someone spills water. I prefer the students not get addicted to the caffeine, but I can't say much about it since I have to have coffee before I come to school and have to have a soft drink each afternoon. Caffeine is addictive and people have to be careful."

■ **STEPHEN EDBERG, History teacher and leader of the teacher group**

"The change is based solely on financial reasons. The water company has offered to put in a new scoreboard on the football field and has offered to furnish other things for the athletic department. Classroom teachers see no reward for sacrificing something else. We have already sacrificed coffee. The soft drink companies have withdrawn their offer for those same services because their products are not bringing in as much money these days. All we want is to have a choice of beverages.

I enjoy a soft drink with lunch and during my planning period. Sometimes the kids give me a headache, and I need more than water to help cure it. Quite frankly, if they don't leave the machines in place, we'll just have to bring in our own soft drinks and put them in our faculty refrigerator. We do want the students to have a choice, too, though."

■ **ZAIL DUGAL, spokeswoman for the International Bottled Water Association, located in Dallas**

"You should compare bottled water to food products, not to utility. People are turning to bottled water as an alternative to soft drinks. People buy bottled water because it tastes better than their tap water.

"Even though some people compare bottled water to tap water, with bottled water, the water goes into a bottle that is sealed. In tap water, the water goes into the distribution system of the city, which may go through pipe that is 20-30 years old."

■ **WILLIAM BOWLES, professor at the Baylor College of Dentistry**

"Bottled water generally has virtually no fluoride in it. That's fine for adults, but children and teenagers need fluoride. While fluoridated brands may be on the market, there's isn't a good way to know how much fluoride is in there.

"Fluoridation levels in municipal water supplies are largely standardized and information is available to the public. Bottled water companies have convinced consumers that this water is different from other water — that it is pure and natural, and these are attributes that people want. People buy water even without a definite sense of what pure or natural means. A lot of bottled water comes from city wells."

■ **MARK RUBENS, senior**

"Sometimes lectures can get boring, or we had to work late on an assignment. We need caffeine, and soft drinks are a good way to get a little jolt of caffeine. Coffee doesn't taste good to me but soft drinks do. Most teachers are pretty cool about allowing us to bring soft drinks into the classrooms, but it just won't be the same if we can just bring water. It may be trendy in places like Dallas or Austin, but water is not trendy in Leaguetown. We all have it in our faucets at home."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At least one-fourth of bottled water sold in the United States can be traced to municipal water systems, although it may undergo any number of further treatments. Large cities have sophisticated equipment and a broad range of technical expertise to cleanse water, whereas smaller cities may not be as well prepared to clean tap water.

The water in Leaguetown has passed vigorous testing and is considered among the safest in the state.