

Society's death wish?

By Gerry Landsborough
Emotion is the driving force that often carries us high on a wave of misguided, compassion, sympathy and indeed empathy - the driving force that often clouds our judgment and consequently misdirects it.

The tragic death of rookie police officer Constable Harry Sneddon only 22 years of age is a case in point. Constable Sneddon was shot to death Friday with his own gun while answering a call to a domestic dispute. His tragic death has once more brought an outcry from police forces across this country for a return to capital punishment.

The abolishment of capital punishment was written into

Canadian law on July 14, 1976. Since that date there has been almost a steady outcry from the supporters of the death penalty for a return to capital punishment - "a life for a life".

Senseless death is always a tragedy and certainly Harry Sneddon's death was a senseless thing, but capital punishment or no capital punishment his was not a premeditated affair. As harsh as it may seem the old adage "those who live by the sword, die by the sword" still applies. A gun is an instrument whose sole purpose is death when one carries a gun you automatically run the risk of getting shot.

In today's society a policeman has a lonely and unre-

warding job. He is often mistrusted and disliked by the very people he is sworn to protect. He lives in an in-between world, he faces the waste of our society the leftovers the losers those who for whatever reason just couldn't measure up. On the beat or in a patrol car he is virtually alone facing a hundred thousand different possibilities. He never knows what will happen or from where it will come. The criminal element all around him is always in control of his actions. His only personal security is his weapon, and yet could we fool ourselves even for a moment to believe that the fact that our policemen carry guns deters crime.

By the same token, capital punishment in no way effects crime. A tragedy such as the death of Harry Sneddon was a crime of passion, a crime of the moment; capital punishment would have no effect whatsoever on such a misfortune.

We don't want to see our police officers shot down, but for the moment we have to put

emotion aside and consider whether capital punishment is indeed a deterrent. Constable Sneddon was the first policeman on the Metro force to be killed in the line of duty since 1973 - that was three years before the death penalty was abolished.

Let us look to other high risk jobs - that of a construction worker, a race car driver, a miner, a diver the list could be endless all have a built in possibility of death. The job of a cop also carries a built in death factor, whether you like it or not, if you carry a gun you run the risk of getting shot. The risk, the heartache, the constant hassle is all part of the job. Capital punishment won't change it.

Capital punishment becomes a moral issue in the sense that you cannot condemn the taking of one life by a "jungle law" of the taking of another.

If murder is wrong that is the willful taking of the life of a fellow human being then you cannot justify capital punishment which is the willful taking of the life of another. Murder.

Perhaps the saddest argument in defense of capital punishment is the cost of keeping the criminal confined. Here we put a dollar value on human life we equate cost as a factor in the right to take another human's life.

Justice Minister Otto Lang feels the issue should be decided by a national referendum. The polls say that 80 to 90 per cent of Canadians support the death penalty. But would 80 to 90 per cent of Canadians want to be the one to pull the trapdoor? I think not.

Jails and the death penalty are not a deterrent to crime. Criminal behaviour takes birth in social injustice in the ghetto, in the slum; the other half comes from human beings who have been deprived of love of belonging and what's left are the mental incompetents who perhaps seemed to have it all on the surface, but something in the process of rational thought was lost.

You take the life of one and another stands ready in his or her place. The quick slam of the trapdoor is not the answer. The process of a just society is a painfully slow one. It is a goal that always looms just beyond our grasp but it is a goal that we must strive for. A life for a life is not the answer. What is wrong for one is wrong for society as a whole.

Vengeance never brings back those we have loved so dearly and the return to the barbaric ways of the past shall never bring us justice or peace of mind. To live by the gun is to die by the gun. The answer must, for the survival of mankind lie elsewhere.

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Acton
KAREN ASTRASKAS
11 Campbell Gate
Georgetown
PIERRE AGNES
R.R. 4 Acton
Winners can pick up their certificates at The Herald

Don't forget the **MILTON FALL FAIR** this Friday, Saturday and Sunday

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Sponsored silence held on Saturday

Pupils from three Georgetown public schools will take part in a sponsored silence Saturday to raise funds to help the elderly.

Help the Aged, a self-help organization based in Toronto, is holding the sponsored silence to raise funds for its programs around the world helping senior citizens.

Starting at 10 a.m. at Cedarvale Community Centre, the sponsored silence takes pledges on the length of time a youngster can remain quiet.

Also featured is a one-third of a mile walkathon and film, co-ordinator Bob Beatty said. Help the Aged was started 16 years ago in the United Kingdom to help the aged around the world. It has been in Canada for three years. Prime Minister Trudeau and former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker endorse its efforts.

Mr. Beatty said 75 per cent of the funds raised are used in

ON THE HOME FRONT

Rising — sometimes — to the occasion

By SUSAN De FACENDIS
To be proud of one's children is a perfectly normal maternal desire and, upon those occasions when one has to display them publicly, it should also be normal for her to expect them to rise to the occasion.

However, any mother who knows her children well, suffers certain pre-occasion qualms. While mine have learned that attacking one another at the table with the bread knife is a definite no-no and while I still have high hopes that by the time they reach 30 years of age, they will have stopped addressing each other in public at least, as "nerd," "scab-face" and "el creep-o", I am never quite certain if 16 years of nagging is about to pay off - or go straight down the tube.

One such occasion arose recently, when a young bachelor friend of ours telephoned and asked if he could bring a very dear lady friend, visiting from Switzerland for just one month, to meet us.

I rashly extended a dinner invitation for two days later - and then had 48 hour for my imagination to run wild. With this imminent visit from an overseas guest, we immediately became the "token Canadian family" and, on our shoulders alone rested the burden of her impressions of Canadian family life.

While one can always send out an SOS to the local pizzeria in the face of a culinary disaster, I knew my "token Canadian children" had to be headed off at the pass at all costs and every possible eventually covered.

To allow young Teresa to summon the guests to the winner table was definitely out. I could clearly hear her saying "O.K. everybody! It's pit-out time!"

I warned Richard that, when I placed the vegetables on the table he was not to exclaim, in his usual charming manner, "What's that crud?"

As for Louisa, our perennially member, I was in fear and trembling that she would manage to find a "foreign body" in her salad and send everyone scrambling from the table with her screams of imagined outrage. Louisa has been known at times to mistake a sprinkling of pepper for a horde of Driver Ants.

It was only as the doorknob rang that I remembered to tell them, in graphic detail, what would befall anyone who parked their bubble gum on the table cloth.

Of course, representing Canadian family togetherness so to speak, I was not prepared to gamble too heavily. I strategically seated the children so that every time one of them became a high risk case, I could press one foot firmly on theirs. By the end of the first course my legs were suffering muscle spasms.

The children behaved admirably and by next week I should be able to walk again.

Mr. Beatty said 75 per cent of the funds raised are used in

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YOUR WEEK AHEAD By DAMIS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 A new alliance is likely - personal or business??? Make an effort to maintain a pleasant atmosphere.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May 20 Developments at the employment level indicate a change. Clean up all loose ends.

GEMINI May 21-June 20 Take time out for recreation, creative hobbies, or a bit of romance too. Glamorize routine activities.

MOONCHILD Changes on the domestic scene may involve a move. It's a favorable time for property dealing.

LEO July 23-Aug. 22 Family matters are of prime concern. Short trips and visits help clear the air in settling a thorny situation.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sept. 22 Monday's new moon can be fortunate, financially, providing a mental stimulus for new income-producing ideas.

LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 22 Partnership dealings are emphasized. An influential friend gives you a steer in the right direction.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Now is not the time to incur the displeasure of an adversary. Preserve confidentiality.

SAGITTARIUS Get the ground work started on a new venture you've been mulling over. Investigations are helpful.

CAPRICORN Your reputation is on the line. Pay attention to detail. Weigh the pros and cons.

AQUARIUS Be ready to serve when summoned. Knowledge you have should be shared with others.

PISCES Joint assets should be evaluated. Study ways of saving money. Don't be hasty when disposing of items.

Personality Profile: For your Sun Sign Analysis, send the day, month, year and place of birth plus \$1.00 for postage and handling to Dr. Dams Staff, PO Box 526, Palm Bay, Florida 32909

300 Conservatives attend Mayfield barbecue dinner

Special to The Herald
MAYFIELD — About 300 Progressive Conservatives turned out to hear John McDermid Saturday evening as he blasted the Liberal party and rallied Conservative support in the Mayfield Secondary School auditorium.

The PC candidate for Brampton-Georgetown threw barbs at Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his party. He said Trudeau has just passed down his third restraint program in 10 years and described the PM and his cabinet as "mad slashers". He also took a shot at the prime minister's family life.

"Who said if you don't like it here, then why don't you go to another country? Pierre Trudeau — and only his wife took his advice," he said.

The speech followed a \$10-per-adult-plate beef barbecue. Premier William Davis and Conservative MP's Sinclair Stevens and Otto Jelenik would attend the event. Davis cancelled out and Jelenik did not show up, but Stevens arrived late in the evening for a brief

ANN LANDERS

Dear Ann Landers: I'm 27, male and gay. I'm not unhappy with the way I turn out but I do have a problem. On weekends I enjoy going to gay bars and discos to meet with my friends. Lately I have run into several straight men from 18 to 30 who want to find out what it's like to fool around with another guy.

It's difficult to distinguish between straights and gays these days and I have been tricked several times since January. What burns me up is that most of these guys are married and have families.

I hope you will print this letter and tell those jokers who are looking for a cheap thrill that it's a dirty trick and we don't appreciate it. Thanks a lot. — Chuck in Florida

Dear Chuck: Since yours is the first letter I have ever received complaining about straights who pick up gays in search of a "cheap thrill", I did some checking. According to the authorities, any male who goes in for this type of excitement is not so straight.

Dear Ann Landers: Don't let the bullies grind you down. Just keep on telling those "so-in-love" idiots that when a woman marries a divorced man she marries his first family whether she likes it or not.

Ozzie and I were ga-ga about each other. He told me so much about his miserable wife and how rotten their marriage was, I was sure ours would be perfect. I knew all the things NOT to do. He made it clear in his ex-wife that she would have complete say about the kids (it's what she wanted) and he would be responsible for support and alimony until she remarried — if ever.

In less than a year Ozzie's ex announced she was marrying a man who didn't like kids so we would have to take them. Overnight I became the mother of a 13-year-old boy and an 11-year-old girl. The boys likes me. The girls doesn't.

Ozzie takes Junior to ball games and fishing and I stay at home and fight with the girl. He is thrilled to have his kids back and I'm running a poor third.

I'd like a baby of my own but Ozzie says we've got enough kids. This isn't the way I planned it.

I know it's too late to do anything except bite the bullet, so please, Ann, don't give me any advice — just send me a membership blank for your "Too Soon Old Too Late Smart Club."

— Bitter Herbs

Dear B.H.: You qualify. The membership blank is in the mail.

Dear Ann Landers: Please stop telling single women to join church groups to meet eligible men. Our daughter took your advice and that's where she met this lying skunk. They went together for eight months — very steady. He talked marriage to her and she believed him. My cousin met him and recognized him as a former neighbor. He is married and has two children.

Church can be an ideal place for scoundrels to meet respectable young women. Please warn your readers. — Very Upset

Dear Upset: Some churches have rats in the basement, too, but that doesn't mean your daughter should go out with them. There's no substitute for common sense. A girl who goes with a man for eight months and doesn't pick up a clue that he's married is less than bright.

Got those wedding bell blues over cost... guest list... what to wear... and other details? Ann Landers' completely new "The Bride's Guide" will help. For a copy, send a dollar bill, plus a long, self-addressed, stamped envelope (15 cents postage) to Ann Landers, P.O. Box 11995, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

TODAY'S ANSWER

ACROSS
1 Make amends
8 Contest
11 Hold fast
12 Cleveland
13 Cranky
15 Sun god
18 Goller's gadget
17 Jewish holiday
22 Be ambidextrous
23 Boo
27 Excel
28 Competitor
29 English river

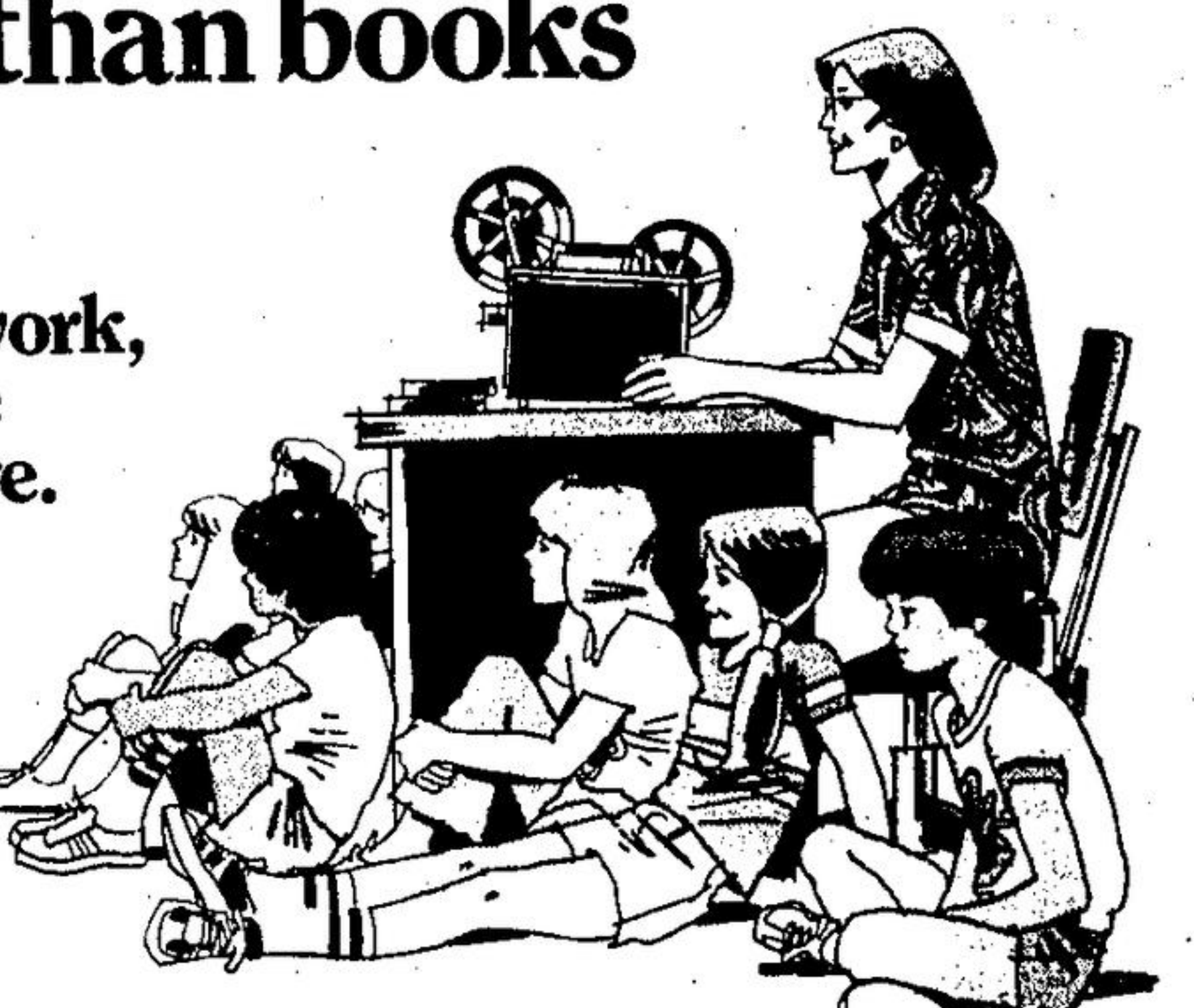
7 Soul: Fr.
8 Civil
9 Wrong
9 Hudson Bay
10 Indian
16 London park
14 Transfer
17 Done with
18 Sooty
19 Wash cycle
20 Tendon
21 German river
24 Russian car
25 Gut
26 Winter plaything
22 Turned
23 Goddess: Lat.
20 The late
21 Callas, e.g.
29 Rubber tree
32 Convenient
33 Seaweed product
41 Dutch commune
42 The: Ger.

30 Contribute
31 Bleached
32 Snake
36 Gardner
37 Armable
43 Ready to do battle
44 Slip away from
45 Compensate
46 Hold back

DOWN
1 Course wool
2 Beverage
3 Archaic
4 Man's nickname
5 Unpleasant view
6 Tree or syrup

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