

**VIEWPOINT**

# World ignores the boat people

By GERRY LANDSBOROUGH  
Herald columnist

A subject that has always intrigued me is how the human mind works, how we relate to things.

For instance - headline: "Man, wife and three small children flounder in storm on Lake Ontario. Joe and Mable Green and children ranging in ages from 10 to five are being tossed about in a small vessel anything but seaworthy in a tremendous storm on Lake Ontario today. Mr. Green sold all the family owned in order to buy the small boat but authorities hold little hope for their survival. Mr. Green is at present unemployed and without any other accommodations for his family.

For most of us that kind of story induces compassion. We identify with the plight of a family down on their luck pitted against the forces of nature. Yet at the same time we barely bat an eyelash at the plight of thousands upon thousands of Vietnamese "boat people" stranded in rickety ships being drowned each day like so much excess baggage.

Some of the reasons for this are as follows: First - a figure of several thousands boggles the mind - we comprehend instantly a family of four or five but several thousand just doesn't register.

Secondly - we identify with situations we might get ourselves into a family down on its luck is acceptable but thousands of refugees fighting for survival just doesn't register.

The third point - is the colour barrier. Though we mouth Christianity each Sunday we really don't readily identify with people whose skin is not the same colour as our own.

A pretty sad bunch aren't we?

The newspapers tell us of thousands upon thousands of people men, women and children, babies stranded without the means of helping themselves yet we choose to basically ignore the situation. Here's another point - there is a report that on one of the islands off Malaysia refugees have developed symptoms of bubonic plague. Our small globe will not contain deadly virus in only one area - a plague anywhere on this globe is a threat to all.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Poul Hartling sent a cable to the Malaysian government saying he was deeply distressed by its recent move to turn away new Vietnamese "boat people." Preventing refugees from landing "will inevitably result in a tragic loss of human lives at sea."

Now again we are not speaking of a family of four or five but thousands upon thousands of people - stranded human beings fleeing their home land from tyranny and oppression.

So far only the United States, France, Canada and Australia have accepted substantial numbers of these stranded people for permanent resettlement.

The United Nations has planned a conference for a "pledge of action" this week in Tokyo by the major industrial countries of the world.

Action...action always boils down to money. These thousands upon thousands of people have to be fed, clothed and relocated. If our Christian churches mouthing brotherly love all crusaded for funds these people would have the change they need for survival.

Many countries throughout the globe have undeveloped areas - northern areas - jungle areas sparsely populated areas with funding and equipment those people could be relocated in ways that would be beneficial to all.

If we do not reach out to help our fellow man in distress we will soon find that our globe has shrunk to the point where their problems quickly become our problems. Plague is a case in point - our today's small globe disease is only a plane ride away.

**Curried Mushrooms**  
Here's a quick kitchen tip: Saute one pound sliced fresh mushrooms and three-quarters cup of minced onion in six tablespoons of butter for five minutes. Add one clove crushed garlic and one and one-half teaspoons of curry powder. Cook two minutes longer, then add one-third cup of beef broth and one-quarter teaspoon of salt. Serve over noodles, rice or mashed potatoes.

# Acton's postmaster dies on vacation

Acton postmaster Gordon McKeown died June 20 at Ross Memorial Hospital, Lindsay at the age of 60.

He was on a boating vacation on the Trent Canal at the time of his death.

Mr. McKeown was born in Erin township and received his elementary education at Greenock Public School and Acton Continuation School. He began working in the post office about 25 years ago and

was Acton's postmaster for at least 20 years. He was active in Trinity United Church and belonged to the Acton Rotary Club for more than 20 years.

Mr. McKeown is survived by his wife, Shirley, and his children Dr. Thomas McKeown of Peace River, Alberta, Brenda Coles of Ottawa, Jim of Toronto and Peter of Acton. He also leaves sisters, Lillian Watson of Stoney Creek, Kate McMillan of

Georgetown, and brothers, Lloyd of Waterdown, Erwin of Toronto and Ralph of Limerick as well as five grandchildren. He was predeceased by one sister, Josephine Whitman.

Funeral services for Mr. McKeown were held from the Shoemaker Funeral home in Acton at 1:30 p.m. June 23 with interment following in Fairview Cemetery.



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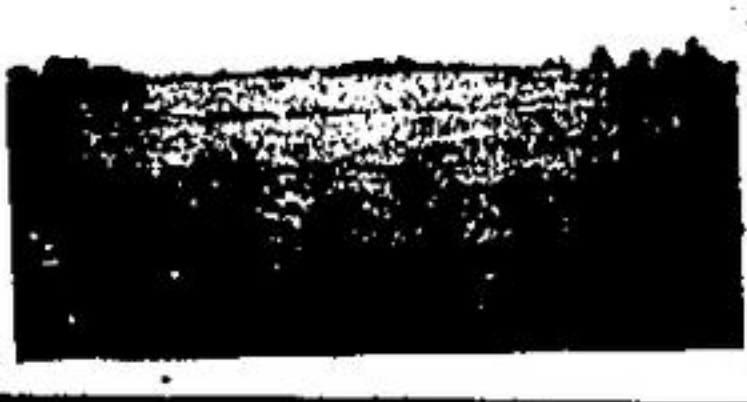
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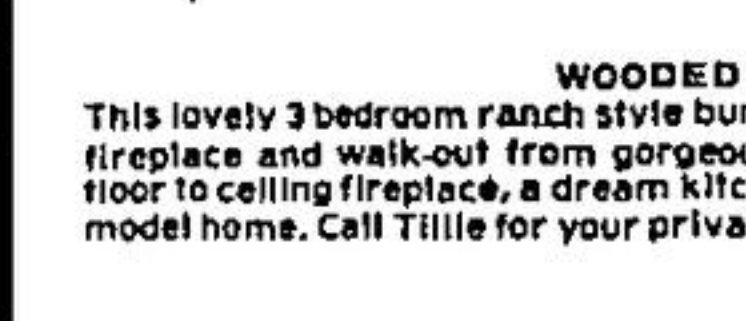
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