

## EDITORIAL

With Tim Morgetroyd



# Crime does pay

The verdict is in and tempers are boiling.

In Charles Dickens' England judges had starving children sent to the gallows for stealing a loaf of bread. Now the legal pendulum has swung to the opposite extreme. Verdicts like last week's "slap on the wrist" sentence of Karla Homolka, or the refusal of a B.C. judge a few years ago to jail a child molester because the judge accused the victim, a baby girl, of being "sexually aggressive," show just how far the pendulum has swung.

In the last 10 years every time the public believe that pendulum has swung as far as it can go they have been proven wrong. It continues to swing as fast as ever toward the ultimate extreme: a state of legal anarchy. The tiny gap between slap on the wrist verdicts and no punishment at all is closing fast.

During the sentencing of Karla Homolka the judge, Francis Kovaks, said the "shocking" crimes causing "revulsion of the community" illustrated the need for deterrence. He then predicted Homolka could be "rehabilitated." In the words of one angry spectator, the verdict was a travesty and "final injustice against two schoolgirls."

Verdicts this soft destroy the public respect for the legal system, but far worse is the lesson people capable of such acts learn: If the value of a Kristen French is so high why is the price for destroying her so low? Why all the noise and tears over something with a flea market price tag?

Why do some judges and parole boards advertise this message, by reducing punishment when see the skyrocketing crime rate, and bolder criminals? Because they decided their own role is not to enforce the law and deter crime, it is to speedily rehabilitate criminals.

Instead of seeing themselves upholding the justice system and protecting the public, these judges and parole boards decide they are social engineers who must make the public tolerate and accept murder so they will accept the murderer back into their neighbourhoods and workplace.

They can never, never admit it with words but they admit it with their actions: As long as murder and rape and molestation are considered monstrous, so is the murderer, rapist, and molester, and creating a normal environment for them outside jail becomes impossible.

Deciding all or most muderers, rapists and child molesters can be rehabilitated obviously means we must stop thinking these crimes are heinous and revolting, or we will keep treating the guilty as if they are heinous and revolting.

With deterrence being divorced from the law, and justice with it, shockingly light sentences, and suspended sentences, will become more widespread because every time a sentence is cut in half these judges believe the disruption of a murderer's life is reduced by half, and they only need half as long to re-join the mainstream.

Unless the pendulum is stopped now soon they will be typical and ordinary, and the only way we can protect ourselves from becoming victims will be to wear judge's robes if we want the old-fashioned luxury of a walk in the neighbourhood after dark.

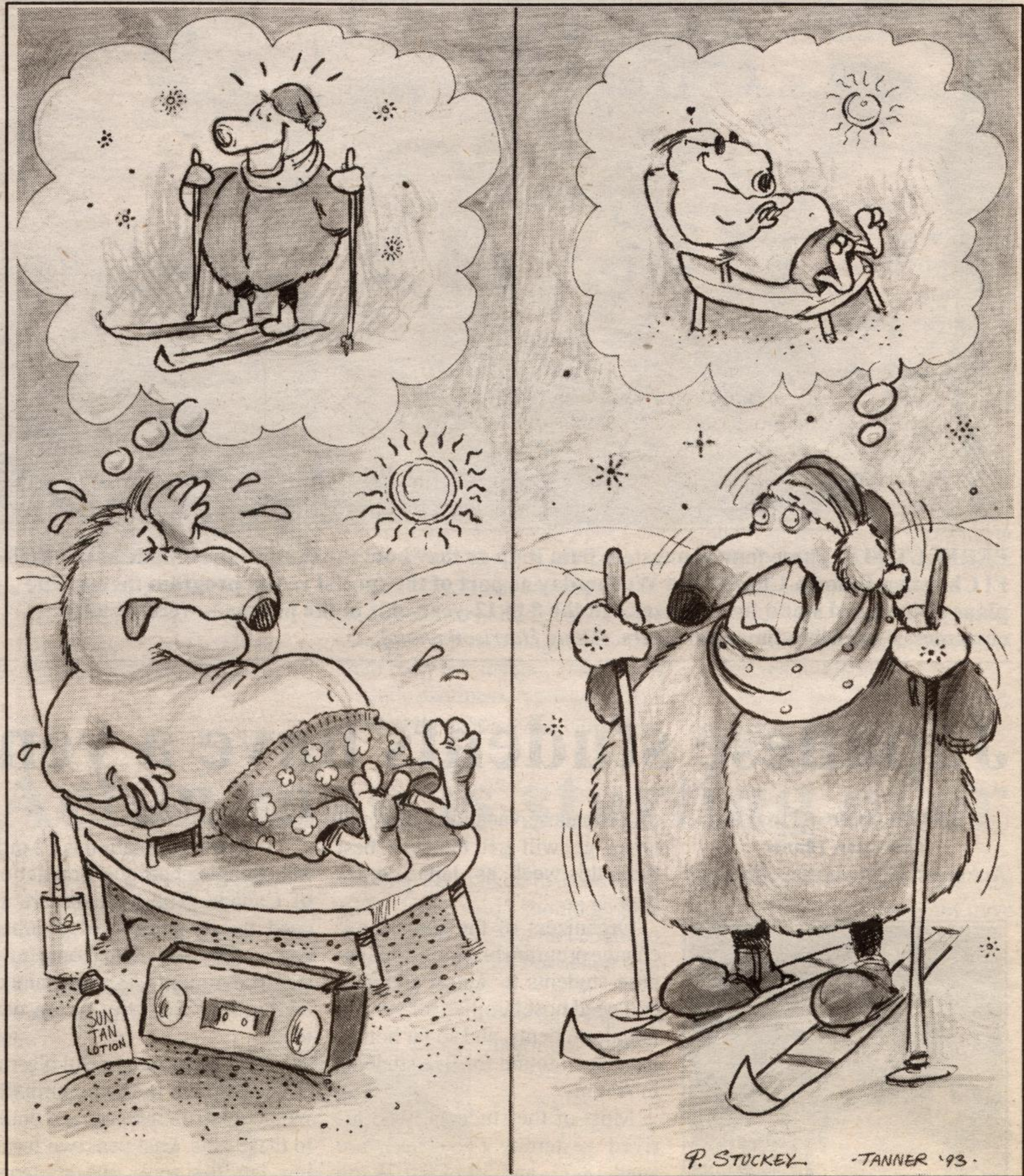
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It may have been a small story when an Acton teen had the wallet he lost during the Canada Day fireworks returned the next day, but we would still like to salute the Good Samaritan responsible.

Like the old saying that when you watch your pennies the dollars take care of themselves, it is small gestures like these that add up to a good community spirit. Thoughtfulness, like laughter, can be contagious, and we need plenty of both to get through the economic blues that have worn everyone's patience thin.

Too often it is the smallest things that push us past the breaking point, just like that one last snowflake that adds the weight needed to make a roof collapse. And surprisingly often the smallest thoughtful acts can make a huge bandage. The director of a local charity recently said when people are struggling to survive even a cup of tea can make all the difference in the world.

Words to remember.



## LETTERS

### POWER trip

To the Editor,

Two weeks ago, several Acton residents and two local newspaper editors published justifiable condemnations of some despicable actions by POWER which could still cripple this community.

Last week, the inevitable letters-in-rebuttal from various POWER members appeared. More misrepresentations of fiction as facts, more sanctimonious attempts to "clarify" the cult's motives and intentions — at best, it's just more well-meaning but dangerously deluded flatulence; more likely, it's intentional dishonesty.

To paraphrase a famous maxim by an otherwise obscure Victorian philosopher, John Acton: Power tends to corrupt and POWER is intellectually corrupt. More people realize this each and every week.

Consequently, POWER has — in my estimation — become a net-negative in the fight to STOP THE

DUMP. The current leadership is exhausting the considerable credibility it inherited from the founders on idiotic misadventures which — in reality — have absolutely no meaningful connection whatsoever to the R.S.I. issue.

These zealots — the POWER cadre — have, in the course of their stupid digressions, alienated such a broad spectrum of the population that they have completely negated the organization's capacity to act as an effective conduit for community cooperation.

No longer part of the solution, POWER is now part of the problem because it continues to vacuum up scarce resources which could otherwise be productively deployed to fight R.S.I.

Instead of discussing who should get whom to write "unprompted" rebuttals to this letter, the cadre should dig deep and muster the decency to do the right thing: disband the organization. But not before turning its bank balance over to the Town of Halton Hills, a publicly accountable body, to ensure that the funds will be focused on the fight for which they were solicited — to STOP THE DUMP.

Steve Dawkins, Acton

### Beat the heat

To the Editor,

As a result of recent controversy regarding Gwen Jacobs in the city of Guelph going topless and winning her case, I would like to make a statement directed towards the female population.

It is no longer against the law to bare your breasts in public. Ladies if you feel the urge to do this and you don't feel embarrassed or scared to do so, then go for it.

If the weather calls for it and you wish to beat the heat and even get a better tan, then what are you waiting for; you can't get charged for indecent exposure.

I realize there are places where this action would not be justified, such as work or school, and you might get some slack from peers but I'm sure they'll sympathize. If they don't then I'm sure appropriate action will be taken.

Simon Entwistle, Main Street

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