

THE HALTON HILLS **WEEKEND**

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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We bid adieu

Our sincere condolences go out to the Robson family. The sudden death of Bill at the regional council meeting Wednesday came as a shock to us all, and we can only imagine the pain his family members are experiencing.

When speaking to Bill's fellow councillors about remembrances they have of Bill one sentiment was reiterated over and over again — Bill had strong convictions and stood for what he believed.

That was very evident in Bill's performance around the council table. While he did not speak often at the regional or local level, when he did he spoke with great emotion. His strong feelings and convictions were evident in every comment he made.

Bill served the constituents of Ward 2 well. He had a real commitment to the rural area and its residents. The Niagara Escarpment was important to Bill, his wife Joan said it was one of the things closest to his heart. Bill served the region well as its representative on the Niagara Escarpment Commission and worked hard to protect what he considered a gift to the people of Ontario.

In turn Bill provided a gift too — a gift of his time and service to the people of this community. He will always be remembered.

RR2



All that summer exercise and now you find even your fall sweater has shrunk.

Did you know?

Bread and water is the sustenance of life, unless you suffer from celiac disease. Celiac disease is a chronic medical condition in which the life-sustaining nutrient-absorptive surface of the small intestine is seriously damaged by a protein called gluten, found in wheat, rye, triticale, barley and oats. That requires the elimination in the diet of all gluten containing products such as bread, pastas, pizza and many other processed food products which contain hidden sources of gluten. It's estimated that 1 in 2,000 Canadians are affected by celiac disease, with a range of symptoms including anemia, fatigue, irritability, cramps and bloating, diarrhea, and itching rash. October 14 to 22 is Canadian Celiac Awareness Week.

WHY'S QUEEN'S PARK SO ANXIOUS FOR US TO WEAR BIKE HELMETS ANYWAY?!



NEASE, '95

A capital idea

Well worth watching on TV recently was a documentary entitled Procedure 769. This was of particular interest to Canadians, especially those in Ontario, as this documentary dealt with the death penalty in America.

Capital punishment and the restoration of the death penalty in Canada for the most serious of crimes is a subject that has once again come to the forefront, after the nightmarish revelations in the recent Paul Bernardo trial.

Procedure 769 was the description given to the list of details and bureaucratic procedures that had to be in place so that the first execution in 25 years could be carried out at San Quentin Prison in California. The subject was one Robert Alton Harris, a convicted killer. Harris shot two teenaged boys to death and later bragged that he finished eating the lunch they had just picked up from a local fast food place when he shot them.

Sentenced to death in 1978, he spent 14 years fighting his sentence until it was finally carried out in 1992. Never showing any remorse until his last seconds of life, Harris was known as the laughing killer because of a frequently shown TV clip of him smiling for the camera.

As part of The Passionate Eye series, Procedure 769 was broadcast on CBC Newsworld and also shown at this year's Toronto Film Festival. It is a study in contrast of how the death penalty and the execution of Harris is viewed by the many people who witnessed the actual execution. Approximately 50 people, including law enforcement officials, media, the convicted killer's family

and representatives of the victims' families were in attendance.

While the prison warden handles the details with an almost clinical thoroughness, the friends and families wait with very different expectations of the outcome of appeal after appeal. The film, while trying to remain neutral, shows the very different make-up of the witnesses. As the last hours approach, the witnesses are summoned to wait. The victims' families are at a reception hosted by the warden's wife. The newly-found spiritual advisors to Harris are in his cell together with various relatives saying

The film describes in detail, through the eyes of the witnesses present, the convict's reaction to the lethal gas, as it is released between his legs and he gasps to take his last breath before he dies.

His family, friends and sympathizers are naturally distraught by the events that they have just witnessed, while the victims' families comment that they hoped that he had struggled more in his last seconds of life. The media members appear shaken and, if anything, horrified by the execution.

How should this, or might this, affect Canadians faced with the difficult task of seeking justice for the most serious of crimes? Certainly the groundswell of support for restoring the death penalty in Canada is growing in popularity. The question that we have to ask ourselves is, is the death penalty fitting punishment for taking another life? Senior police officers that I have spoken to think not.

For me, I have always felt that long term imprisonment for serious crimes was a fitting punishment. Imprisoned without parole, without color television, basketball, and any other luxury for that matter. Sentences should be served without automatic early release. Faith perhaps would then begin to be restored in our justice system.

But, when the most serious of crimes is committed, certainly in my opinion, the death penalty is warranted. Such is the case for the likes of the Olsons, the Fredericks, Bernardos and Homolkas of the world. No sentence could be too swift or too severe.

Ken Nugent is the publisher of The Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press.

My View



KEN NUGENT

their last goodbyes.

The media, reserved but curious, are coming to the realization that they about to see another human being put to death. The warden makes sure that every piece of equipment in San Quentin's ancient gas chamber is working as it should. List after list is checked and rechecked with the coldness of a military operation.

Finally, Harris is strapped into the gas chamber in front of the witnesses. After one last spine-chilling stay of execution comes through, Harris is released from the gas chamber, only to have the entire procedure repeated when the final message to proceed is received.