

Comment

Scandalous punishment

Crime does pay. At least it seems to pay as long as you steal from the federal government, or more specifically — the taxpayers of Canada.

Just ask Paul Coffin, the ad executive who pleaded guilty last week to 15 counts of fraud totalling \$1.5 million of taxpayers money.

Coffin was one of three men charged in the sponsorship scandal that nearly toppled the minority Liberal government.

The sponsorship program, designed mainly to promote national unity in Quebec, allegedly saw \$100 million in fees and commissions go to Liberal-friendly ad agencies from 1997 to 2003.

By his own admission, Coffin's ad agency was the beneficiary of \$1.5 million through bogus invoices and inflated commissions charged for work that in some cases was never done.

His punishment? Well, it definitely wasn't hard time, and describing it as soft time might even be a stretch.

After pleading guilty in a Montreal courtroom, Coffin was given a conditional sentence of two years less a day, which will be served in the community.

The judge also imposed a 9 p.m. curfew and ordered him to give university seminars on ethics. In addition, Coffin must hire an independent controller to approve all billings and invoices for his advertising business.

The Crown had been seeking a 34-month jail sentence, which we believe was a more accurate reflection of the seriousness of this crime.

In handing down his sentence, the judge took into account the efforts and indebtedness Coffin has undertaken to repay nearly all of the missing \$1.5 million. Considering the money was never his in the first place, we think that was the least he could do.

The lenient penalty ignores one of the main principles of sentencing — deterrence. What kind of message is this sending out to the public? Is it stating that white collar crime is really okay? If you get caught, just say you're sorry and repay the money?

Coffin's sentence makes a complete mockery of our justice system and does nothing to guard against a repeat of the sponsorship scandal in the future.

It just adds insult to injury.



Our Readers Write

Response to letter greatly appreciated

Dear Editor:

My son and I would like to thank everyone for their recent calls and notes in response to my letter in the August 30 Champion regarding my son's stolen bicycle.

The support shown by everyone's concern and generosity has made a frustrating situation a great deal easier to deal with.

To a very special gentleman and senior

couple, I send out a very special thank you. Because of you my children have a wonderful example of the importance of caring for others.

In today's hectic environment where much is taken for granted, the kindness of strangers is something we will never forget.

Thanks again.

**Peggy Cahoon
Woodward Avenue**

Thanks to all who supported our lemonade stand to help the Hurricane Katrina victims

Dear Editor:

Our names are Emily Knight, Lindsay Sinclair and Paul Knight.

Over the Labour Day weekend we had a lemonade stand set up to raise money for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We managed to raise \$150.

We're writing this letter to thank all the people who bought lemonade and made a donation — many dropping in \$20 for a glass.

Thank you for all your help. We're glad we live in a community

with such caring and thoughtful people.

We decided to do this stand because of what we saw on television. We wanted to help the families and children who have lost everything.

It was heartwarming when we counted the money and saw how much we had raised.

We would also like to thank Troy Newton, who owns Troy's Diner. He came to our house after he saw our picture in The Champion and

gave us a cheque for \$150 to match what we had raised. We were so shocked at his generosity.

Thanks so much Troy. Now our total is \$300.

After this experience we decided to create a motto — 'You gave them your money, you gave them your time, but most of all you gave them your help'.

Thanks to everyone for their generous donations.

**Emily Knight, Lindsay Sinclair
and Paul Knight**

The Canadian Champion

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THE CANADIAN CHAMPION IS A PROUD MEDIA SPONSOR FOR:



The Milton Canadian Champion is a Recyclable Product

Televisions at gas stations simply unnecessary

Dear Editor:

In today's era of conserving energy, cutting back on non-essentials and generally making do with less, why do some companies not follow suit?

Well I'm sure some companies do, but many don't.

I made that observation the other day while putting liquid gold in my car. Why are there televisions for us to watch while we pump?

This to me is very unnecessary, and not energy efficient.

Could that money not go toward something more worthwhile? How about putting it toward employees wages or charities that they support?

If we're suppose to recycle, reduce and reuse, then doesn't the need to watch television while we're pumping gas seem silly?

Let's spend that money on something a little more useful.

**Sher Fjell
Milton**

Pud

by Steve Nease

