

Friends of St. Marie plan busy schedule

Dear Friends:

During the spring months we are planning some special events in which we would like to see your participation.

Firstly, April 25 is our special children's program. This year in cooperation with the Midland Braves lacrosse team we are sponsoring a lacrosse workshop. It begins at 10

a.m. at Huron Park School. In the morning children will learn a little about the history of lacrosse and make a lacrosse stick and ball. After eating their bagged lunch children will learn more about the game through demonstrations and actual playing of the game. The day ends at 2 p.m. Cost is \$3 per child. Register by calling 526-7838. Enroll-

ment is limited.

On May 7, there will be a special showing of the movie "The Mission" for Sainte-Marie staff, Martyr's Shrine staff and the "Friends". It begins at 8 p.m. and the cost is \$3. For further information and/or reservation of tickets please call Rita at 526-7838.

There are some tentative plans made for a bus trip to Montreal for "Quilt Canada '87" and to Quebec City to see the textile display of the Ursuline Nuns, and similar collections. Quilt Canada '87 will be held on Loyal Campus of Concordia University sponsored by "CUILTE" Montreal (south shore quilters guild) and Beaconsfield Quilters guild. Exhibition of Quebec quilts, bilingual workshops, fashion shows, lectures, merchants malls and tours of Montreal to see other quilt exhibitions are on the agenda. This was discussed with Joyce Taylor-Dawson at our Altar Frontal workshop and she hoped to be able to meet us in Quebec City and accompany us.

I realize that this is rather short notice as the trip is planned for May 28-31. The cost will be somewhere between \$160 and \$200 for bus and accomodation. This cost depends on whether we take a small coach (39) or a large coach (47) and if we sleep two per room or four per room. I need to know by April 24 if you are interested. As of now no plans or reservations have been made. If we have enough interested people then I will attempt to make bookings for that weekend. Please let me know if you are interested. We need at least 39 people to make this trip possible.

June 13 and 14 is volunteer appreciation weekend. Cathie Malcolm is organizing this weekend to honour all volunteers for Sainte-Marie among the Hurons and the Historic Naval and Military Establishments. If you

know of anyone who has been a volunteer at one of these sites at any time please have them call Cathie at 549-4366. If you have volunteered yourself call Cathie.

As part of the Volunteer weekend we wish to thank all of the Friends volunteers by serving a Friends breakfast. It will be served at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons from our cafe on June 14 from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Volunteers must register before hand and you can pick up your breakfast ticket at no cost with your registration package on June 13. We would like to make this event a success. It is a time for all "Friends" old and new to get together and share their interest in Sainte-Marie. Contact us and let us know if you plan to attend. Other members of your family who wish to attend but haven't volunteered may do so for a nominal cost of \$1.50 for adults and 75 cents for children.

For further information about all or any of these special events please call me at 526-7838.

Isobel Ball
Program Coordinator

Computers better police system

Computers are fast becoming a fact of everyday life. Sometimes they work behind the scenes in telephone answering machines, automobiles or fine tuning television reception.

In other applications they play a direct role. This editorial for instance came to life at a computer keyboard.

Other jobs and professions are being helped by computers. In medicine they are a valuable diagnostic tool and in police-work computers help reduce the time spent searching criminal records, motor-vehicle information or outstanding warrants.

In Canada, the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) has been in use for almost 15 years.

Last week, the Penetanguishene Police Department came on line with its own CPIC terminal.

The system will provide our police department with fast and accurate information from Canada-wide sources, helping make police-work more effective and cutting down the cost of time spent doing routine searches.

Viewpoint

by Carrie Nieuwhof

Capital punishment debate reopened

The debate on capital punishment has been reopened. The subject is not as pleasant to discuss as, say, what Willie Upshaw's season might be like. Capital punishment is not the kind of subject one should open light conversations with. No, it's not a very pleasant subject at all.

Still, our MPs are calling for nationwide debate on the subject. Looking at the parliamentary calendar, the debate is probably going to be a long one, perhaps dragging into mid-1988.

Capital punishment is one of those issues about which just about everyone has an opinion.

I also think a lot of people are asking themselves why we are having this debate. Didn't we settle this 11 years ago?

The real answer, of course, is that a sizeable number of right wing Tory backbenchers want to bring back the noose, and they would have hounded Brian Mulroney until he either yielded or told them to form their own Party. Since Brian needs every Tory he can get these days, he opted for the former.

The Tory backbenchers point to the polls, arguing that 70 per cent of Canadians want the death penalty re-instated. Some of the immediacy that is overriding the debate stems from the recent rash of tragic police shootings. It may also stem from a growing belief that our prison system isn't strong enough, that it lets the real criminals get away.

All of these points are valid, but it does not necessarily follow that the logical conclusion to all this is that Canada should return to the death penalty.

When the calls for the restoration of capital punishment became more acute last year, a lot of people rethought the issue, myself included.

I had always thought of myself as a proponent of the death penalty. Back in my youth (a completely relative term) I was a staunch supporter of the noose. Hang them all was the rallying cry. It was fun to be right wing (on some issues) and to watch people react. Then, of course, I thought about the issue and decided I had better either tone down the rhetoric or join the no comment category. So I either qualified my support for the noose until my remarks became completely understandable — Bill David's — or started talking about Willie Upshaw. Then the capital punishment debate was rekindled on the backbenches, so I decided it was time to understand where I stood.

Some questions popped up for reflection. These were the questions that usually present themselves for consideration. There are few definitive answers, but one can establish some degree of consensus in one's own mind on some of them.

What about the deterrent argument; that if the death penalty is brought back in, fewer people will commit murder? To me, that

question has to be linked to the current penalty for murder.

No one has ever really proven that the death penalty is or is not a deterrent, so that question is extremely difficult to answer. However, everyone agrees that repeat murderers, and especially murderers of children or police officers should not be allowed to get that second chance. Most people agree that the worst criminals — whoever they may be — should be forced to pay dearly for their crimes. Under current laws and the realities of the prison system, many of the "worst" criminals can get out in 25 years. Understandably, that infuriates many of us.

We feel that society has an obligation to punish those who intentionally violate important standards, and rightly so. It is many of these people who get out of jail long before they should, and sometimes do kill again. It is these people, argue the capital punishment proponents, who deserve to die. It is the criminals who have no respect for society and the value of human life that must be done away with. But that argument reeks of vengeance, not justice.

It suggest that, somehow, we are doing good by killing the people who have wronged us, and that by eliminating this element, we have protected ourselves. When you really think about it, that's a hard argument to buy.

It involves the issue of the worth of human life, which is a matter that each person can only decide for him or herself. However, it

also says that we in society are incapable of dealing with the cruelties and injustices around us by any other way but by killing those who are responsible. That's a sad statement. It takes only the stroke of a pen to increase prison terms.

It takes only a small amount of ink in Ottawa to revamp the criminal system to better deal with current societal realities. It takes only courage to create a criminal system which ensures that the worst offenders do not get the chance to kill again, and to solve many of the problems our penal system now faces. One would be foolish to suggest that there is no public support for such moves. One has to question whether bringing back the death penalty is going to do any of that.

So it might be understandable that people are upset about what the "real criminals" get away with. It is perfectly understandable that we are outraged at the police shootings and child murderers. We should have a criminal system that is tough and one that does not allow for errors that result in future injustices. But that does not necessarily mean we should have one that substitutes toughness for vengeance.

So think about capital punishment. That's what our MPs want us to do. Perhaps when you consider some of the key issues you may find inside you what I found inside myself — the makings of an abolitionist.

Letters

The Penetanguishene Citizen welcomes Letters to the Editor. They must be legible, signed (by hand), and carry the writer's address and telephone number for verification. Pen names are not allowed and anonymous letters will not be published. Letters published by this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this newspaper, its publisher or editor.

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