

Terrace Bay Schreiber News

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The Last Word

These are the Facts

by LYNNE BADGER

The question of Seat belts on school buses has been raised again and will be discussed soon at a Lake Superior Board of Education meeting.

Audrey Ferguson has expressed concern over children riding school buses without seat belts in her article submitted to the news. She asks two questions:

1. Why does the law insist we buckle our kids in our own vehicles and not in buses?

2. Are buses immune from accidents?

To answer the first question, very simply, the vehicles are not comparable. The Ministry of Education stated in a letter that "Studies have shown significant

safety factor in a small motor vehicle, such as a car, where the occupants are in close proximity to the hazards of the steering wheel, dashboard, windshield, doors and windows. It prevents their contact with these potentially dangerous objects in a crash situation."

"In studies conducted with school buses it was found that other features such as higher seat backs with more padding, firmer seat fixation, and padded stanchions could decrease injuries in these larger vehicles. These features have therefore become standard for new school buses. The height and size of the windows in buses and the distance of the passengers from the doors

usually prevent ejection, a great danger in the passenger car. The Traffic Research Team at the University of Western Ontario concluded from its studies that the installation of lap belts would not improve the safety record of large school buses, but that injury would actually be more likely in an accident such as a rollover, where small children might be unable to release themselves."

In answer to the second question, no, buses are not immune from accidents but they do have an excellent safety record. According to statistics in Canada and Ontario, school buses are the safest form of road transport. The fatality rate in 1978 was .5 per 100,000 pupils and

an injury rate of 49 per 100,000 which yields an injury ratio of .1 per million passenger miles as compared to .8 per million passenger miles for all other highway vehicles. 50 per cent of the fatalities and injuries occurred when pupils were outside the bus and since 1978, the buses have been made safer with the high back seats etc.

Human error is a principal factor in causing school bus accidents. The high incidence of school bus drivers' errors indicates the need for more discriminating selection of school bus drivers as well as more effective driver training programmes. The high incidence of pedestrians injured, after being

struck by vehicles while crossing roads to or from the bus, suggests the need for a public education campaign.

Locally, the public and separate schools have educated students in the proper conduct aboard the bus and the Lake Superior Board initiated a special School Bus Safety Program this year in co-operation with the local police forces.

When the question of seat belts in buses is brought up, another concern is "Will there be a conflict of message received by the children if they buckle up in one vehicle and not the other?" I can say from personal experience, yes, they will, because I was asked why buses do not have seat belts by my daughter. I explain-

ed that buses were specially made to be safe without seat belts because the seats are high and she will not be thrown out as she would in a car. Her response; "then I just have to stay sitting down in my seat and be good."

If a four year old can understand that a bus is safer than a car and doesn't need seat belts or at least will accept that as fact, then it seems it should not be difficult for the older children and parents to understand.

It is a fact that "research and test data available fails to support the conclusion that providing seat belts in school buses would improve the injury statistics."



I trust that the Lake Superior Board of Education will accept that fact as the Ministry of Education, Ontario and Canadian Medical Associations already have, and not require that seat belts be installed in Mr. Trotter's buses.

Opinion

Response

by VIVIAN LUDINGTON

This is in answer to the letter by Mr. Capy published in the Terrace Bay Schreiber News on October 24/84.

I, as a woman, was sick and outraged by this gentleman's (and I do use the term lightly) words. He has never had a child and never will. Thank you God, for small favors.

I want to make it very clear that I am not a pro-abortionist, but, I am in favor of a person having control over his or her own body. When I was having an operation to have my tubes tied, my husband was supposed to sign the form along with me but I refused to let him as it was my body having all the pain not his. If he had decided to be sterilized rather than me then he would have gone to the doctor's office at lunch and "cut, cut". It would have been all over, no more children, and I wouldn't have to sign papers for him.

Can anyone out there honestly say that if your child was raped that you would put her through nine months of pain and humiliation rather than putting her into hospital and having the pregnancy terminated the first couple of weeks, ending as well the violent and emotionally upsetting experience.

What 12, 13 or 14 year old girl wants or needs a baby? Mr. Capy says that you can give the baby up for adoption. I ask him if he would like to spend the rest of his life wondering where his first born is?

Mr. Capy also asks if the nurses and doctors rejoice at seeing an aborted baby and then says that the nurses and doctors smiled when they saw his children born. Well if he had done his homework he would know that the

same doctors and nurses who smile when his children were born were also there when the 12 year old rape victim was having hers. All the deliveries and departures are done in the same room on the gynecology ward.

As for this man's mention of an aborted baby's cry, well if it is dead then there is not much hope of it crying.

If women had more control over their bodies then there would be a lot less abortions. Some husbands don't want their wives to have their tubes tied and will not go to the doctors office on their lunch break, for fear of messing up their masculinity.

In answer to your question about seeing a garbage can full of aborted babies or babies flushed down the toilet, "NO" I have not, and where the hell have you seen it?

Machines have been developed that tell if you have a deformed or retarded baby which is just great because if it was me, about to have a retarded child I would rather have an abortion. Because to be very honest with everyone, I do not think that I would be able to handle a child that had anything wrong with it.

I have never had an abortion but I can say that if I had had one there would be NO reason for me to look back because it would have been something that I would have thought long and hard about and decided by myself. I also don't think that God would look down on me because that is not the way my parents raised me. God loves me just the way I am, but I have no love for the people in the world that have children that they don't want but keep them just so that they can beat on them.

Hooray for Dr. Henry Morgantaller.



Arthur Black

Good news blues



A common lament you hear in this business runs along the lines of: "You media ghouls! All you ever give us is the bad news! The rapes, the famines, the four-car collisions ... Why can't you give us some GOOD news for a change?"

Ah yes, Virginia. If I had a Jameson's-and-water for every time I've heard that blues refrain, I wouldn't have to care who was President of the US and Leader of the Western World. I wouldn't even notice.

Brushing aside McLuhan's apt observation that "The real news is bad news." -- let me just say that so-called "Good News" newspapers - pert little Pollyanna broadsheets, crammed with Haveaniceday stories about puppy dogs and Lotto-winning grandmas -- have been tried. They

last, on average, about two dozen issues before they fold. Nobody buys 'em. People say they want Smile Button journalism, but they gobble up the grim and ghastly every time.

Having said all that ... how about, a little good news for a change? I have a trio of pleasantly up-beat tales to pass along, such as this one about Lake Erie. Remember dear old Lake Erie?

Back in the 60's, papers were full of stories about how Lake Erie was choking to death on all the phosphorus and sundry chemical poisons we were pumping into it. More than one expert opined that it was already too late. Lake Erie was dead as a doornail.

Well the good news is: it ain't. After a 15-year, eight billion dollar transfusion from Canadian and

American taxpayers -- mostly for new sewage treatment plants along its shores -- Lake Erie lives. The phosphorus entering the lake has been reduced by 70 per cent. Mind you, you still wouldn't want to drink a glass of the stuff. But it's good enough for the fish. They've returned in teeming numbers and Lake Erie's health continues to improve.

And that's good news.

So's this -- a story out of Alberta, where right now about 13 dozen curious-looking craft are cleared for takeoff, ready to fly south. They are white, long-legged and precious, these craft. Whooping cranes. Just a few years ago the world was down to its last 15 wild ones. Since 1960, US and Canadian biologists have been nursemaid, monitoring and mollycoddling these remarkable birds

so assiduously that there are now 160 of them and we can almost ... almost say that whooping cranes are here to stay. Back in the sixties, the imminent extinction of the whooping crane was a foregone conclusion. Now, the biologists who watch over the birds describe themselves as "cautiously delighted". That's more good news.

Our third and final good news story is also environmentally oriented. It comes from the Metro Zoo in Miami, where last week, officials unveiled their latest acquisition.

It was a pink, mostly hairless, biped with vestigial talons and pathetically undeveloped teeth. The official name over its enclosure reads: *Homo sapiens urbanus*.

That's "Urban Man" in English. For three days, this particular

specimen displayed characteristic behaviour: it rose, shaved, trugged off to its "office" (also in the zoo enclosure) where it spent the day making phone calls and eating fast food snacks.

That's the good news. The bad news is that Homo Urbanus only did it for three days. The specimen was really an actor, hired by the zoo for a three-day engagement as a public relations gambit.

Too bad. I'm sure if the finny denizens of Lake Erie or the whooping cranes of Alberta had anything to say about it, Homo Urbanus would become a permanent zoo acquisition.

I mean as a species we're interesting, but ... let's face it. Considering our record, it would be safer to keep us behind bars.