

**Terrace Bay
Schreiber**

News

The Terrace Bay-Schreiber News is published every Wednesday by: Laurentian Publishing Co. Ltd., Box 579, Terrace Bay, Ontario, P0T 2W0. Telephone: (807) 825-3747.

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Single copies 35 cents
Subscription rates per year
in-town — \$14.00
out-of-town — \$18.00
Member of Ontario Community
Newspapers Association and The
Canadian Community Newspapers
Association.



Editorial

Follow examples

Conservation is an issue that is rarely in the public eye, or at least it isn't there as often as it should be. Lately, however, this has changed for the better in the Terrace Bay area, and that's a good sign indeed.

A local Ducks Unlimited chapter was recently created, and during National Wildlife Week earlier this month, Conservation Officers from the Ministry of Natural Resources visited schools in Schreiber, Terrace Bay, and Manitouwadge with a film about the Canadian Wildlife Service.

Children and adults alike would benefit if they knew just a little more about conservation, and these recent developments should improve the situation in this area.

Now is the time to educate people that this planet of ours and the creatures that live on it are heading for an ecological doomsday unless something is done today. As Earl Butz once said, "Mankind can either lie down and give up, or we can use all of our productive skills and knowledge to work for a better future."

Therefore, thanks should be extended to those involved in the programs mentioned above. At least they are doing their part. But we should all follow Alden Whitman's suggestion: "Our ideals, laws, and customs should be based on the proposition that each generation in turn becomes the custodian rather than the absolute owner of our resources — and each generation has the obligation to pass this inheritance on to the future."



Close To The Edge

By Conrad Felber

Examination of the number of murders before and after the abolition of the death penalty does not support the theory that capital punishment has a unique deterrent effect. ("Capital Punishment," published by the UN, 1968)

Men are not hanged for stealing horses, but that horses may not be stolen. (George Savile, Marquess of Halifax, 1912)

The long and distressing controversy over capital punishment is very unfair to anyone meditating murder. (Geoffrey Fisher)

I suppose you have figured out that I'm thinking about capital punishment this week. Oh, don't worry, I don't have any specific examples in mind. It's just a general topic ... for now.

To put it simply, most Canadians are in favour of bringing back capital punishment, and (for once) I'm with

the majority. Our beloved Prime Minister even won the last federal election partly by promising to have a free vote in Parliament on the issue once elected. Now, I don't recall reading about such a vote being held over the past few months, have you?

I should point out that the first reading of a private member's bill calling for the reinstatement of capital punishment was recently passed in the House of Commons. Big deal. Odds are the bill will get stalled before it comes to a final "yea" or "nay." We should have capital punishment back now, today, not months or even years from now.

Why, you ask? Well, yes, I suppose I haven't really told you why I feel the way I do. Fair's fair. Believe it or not, but I have a number of valid reasons, and the least of them is any possible deterrence factor. It doesn't make any difference one way or

another. Maybe the UN is right. Maybe capital punishment does not cut down on the number of murders. One thing is for sure, though ... it does cut down on the number of murderers. Besides, how can they be sure that capital punishment does not work as a deterrent? A murder not committed because of the fear of the Ultimate Discipline is a murder that doesn't appear in the books.

No, capital punishment is needed for other reasons. Revenge is obviously one. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. There is also the added bonus that, as I said above, an executed killer won't ever kill again.

As it stands now, though, we are sentencing convicted murderers to prison for life, in most cases. Gee, now there's a good idea. Maybe we can reform him so he can go out and lead a normal life when and if he becomes eligible for parole in 25

years. Ha! I agree with former California Governor Jerry Brown, who was once quoted as saying "Prisons don't rehabilitate, they don't punish, they don't protect, so what the hell do they do?"

Even if a killer does not escape, even if he lives out his natural life behind bars, what's the point? A waste of thousands or even millions of taxpayers' dollars is the only thing you'll get in that case. Wouldn't it be easier and — yes, cheaper — to just put them all to death instead? (Killers, that is, not taxpayers!)

Uh oh, here come the bleedin' heart liberals now (and I should now, as usually I'm one of them), whining that we can't always be sure that a convicted murderer actually did the crime. Hey, I'm not saying we should hang car thieves or drunk drivers here. There are some cases, you must



admit, where there is very little doubt remaining as to whether the accused is actually guilty or innocent. Clifford Olsen is a prime example. One way around this is to offer capital punishment as an option to somebody destined to stay in the pen for the rest of his life. After a while, he (or she) may prefer the Rope if there's no Hope of getting out again, especially when you consider how today's prisons are supposedly filled with — ahem — "former" heterosexuals.

But no matter what you think about this issue, a free vote was promised on it, and we haven't had it yet. Now that's a real killer.

Black N' White

By Arthur Black

Seems like every year about this time I get an urge to dig out my favourite quote from a mostly forgotten nineteenth century anarchist by the name of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. The quote is a kind of improvisational scream against the horrors of official government bureaucracy. It goes like this:

"To be governed is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-ridden, regulated, penned up, indoctrinated, preached at, checked, appraised, seized, censured, commanded, by beings who have neither title nor knowledge nor virtue.

To be governed is to have every operation, every transaction, every movement noted, registered, counted, rated, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, refused, authorized, endorsed, admonished, prevented, reformed, redressed, corrected."

Wow! And this comes from a man who never even got to wrestle with a Revenue Canada Income Tax Form!

Well, we live in a fairly hamstrung, buttoned-down world, alright. But there is one small, daily

freedom that's still available to anybody with the price of a stamp — free, in fact, if you're willing to hand-deliver:

Letters to the editor. More often than not they're the liveliest, most succinct feature in the whole blinkin' newspaper. The best letters to the editor are feisty, blunt and chock full of pith and vinegar. Even the lousy ones are better than the government handouts that too many newspapers try to foist on us as "news".

Which is an exceedingly roundabout way to get to an obituary, but that's what I'm here to talk about today. John S. Lynn died last week — and that constitutes a body blow for letters-to-the-editor lovers everywhere.

John S. Lynn was a colossus in the world of letters-to-the-editor writing. He penned his first one at the age of 13. He was writing his final letter to the editor when he passed away last week, at the age of 80. In the intervening 67 years, John S. Lynn peppered, blitzed and bombarded editors of papers everywhere — but especially those of the big Toronto dailies. He kept them apprised of his views on everything from nuclear

disarmament to street car fare increases. When he hit his stride, John S. Lynn could — and did — hammer out five different letters a day.

Good letters, too. Editors were delighted to see the name "J.S. Lynn" in the upper left hand corner of the envelope because they knew the contents would be both newsworthy and well-written. Rob Wright, the man in charge of the Letters Page of *The Toronto Star* says Lynn's letters were an editor's dream: short, sweet and always on the bull's eye. A former *Star* editor by the name of Peter Marucci recalls: "throughout the 70's, J.S. Lynn was the most prolific letter writer we had."

Brevity and wit were the hallmarks of a John S. Lynn letter — quite unlike letter-to-the-editor writer John Sultzbaugh. *The Guinness Book of World Records* credits that prolific Pennsylvanian with having written the longest letter to the editor ever. It ran in a paper called *The Upper Dauphin Sentinel*.

For eight consecutive issues — 23,513 words in all.

At the other end of the scale there is the shortest letter to the editor — and reply — on record. That honour

goes to Victor Hugo. While on holiday in 1862, Hugo became somewhat anxious about sales of his new novel, *Les Miserables*. So, he sent a letter to his literary editor, the entire contents of which read:

"?"

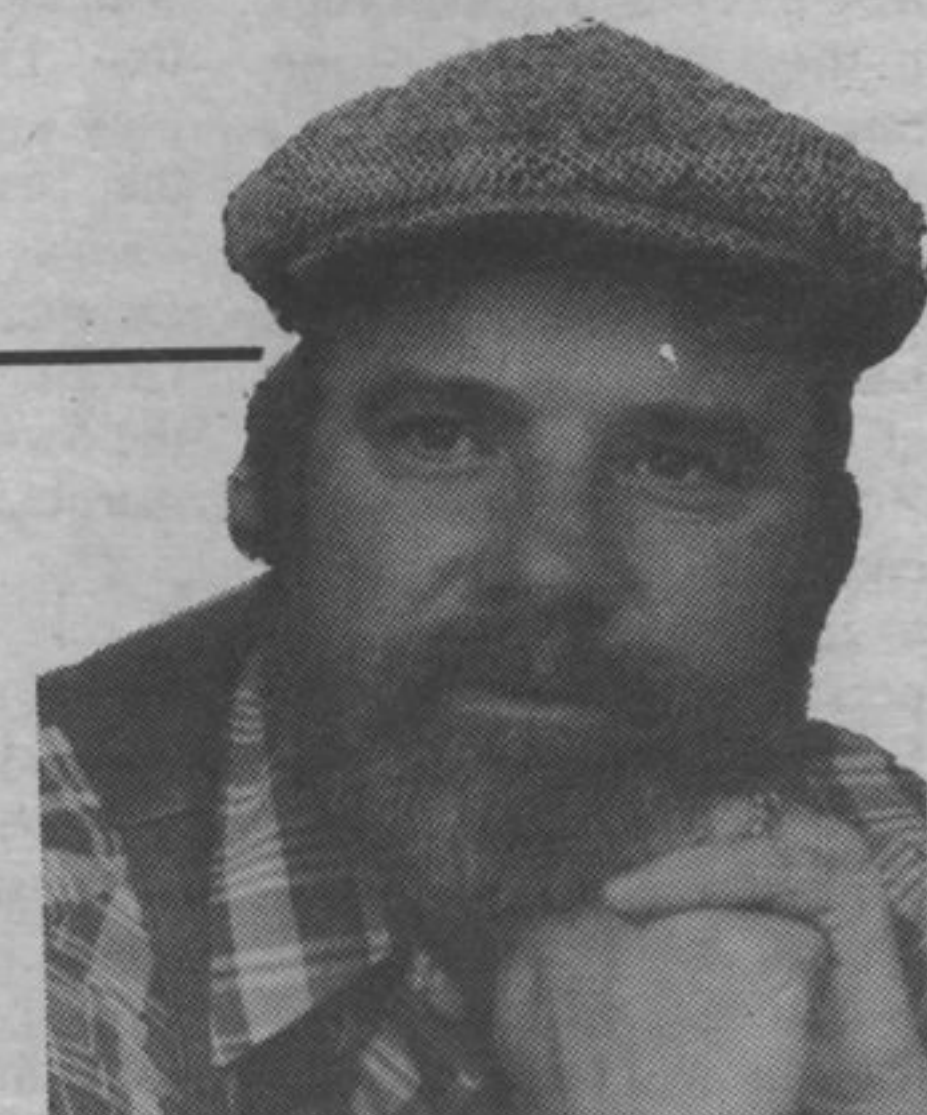
His editor was no slouch when it came to saving paper and ink. A few days later Victor Hugo received a letter which read:

"!"

A not much lengthier, but infinitely crankier letter to the editor came from the pen of Mark Twain back in 1907. The author of *Tom Sawyer*, in a fury about (does this sound familiar?) — lack of government price controls, sent a one-sentence letter to the editor of *The New York Times* which railed in part: "the govment (sic) lets a goddam man charge any goddam price he wants for his goddam opera box."

With a typical Twain twist, old Sam Clemens sent a copy of the aforementioned letter to his good friend, William Dean Howells, along with a note that explained: "I sent this complaint to the *N.Y. Times* with your name signed because I knew it would carry more weight."

Letters to the Editor writers — I



love 'em. Some are loony; more than a few are mule-headed; lots of them deserve a case of perpetual laryngitis. But one thing they never are is meek, or placid or willing to put up with all the BS the rest of us seem to settle for.

John S. Lynn was one of the best. His last letter to the editor concerned Senator Hebert's fast and what effect it would have on Canada's future. We'll never know all of what John S. Lynn thought on the subject — his letter to the editor was only half finished when he died.

His family made certain the letter was on his chest when they put him in the casket.

Perfect. John S. Lynn wouldn't have wanted it any other way.