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# Victims of crime deserve our attention

This past spring a "murders conference" was to have been held at Joyceville Penitentiary in Kingston, Ontario. Over 100 murderers were to have gathered to discuss important issues such as the length of sentences and reductions they wished to see in parole eligibility. The cost of this conference was to have been paid by the Government of Canada. The conference was cancelled by the Solicitor General following a barrage of complaints by the public.

The acting warden of Joyceville penitentiary said officials wanted to bring inmates and authorities together to exchange ideas in a brainstorming session, instead of discussing concerns with inmates individually.

Why was a discussion of the "important issues" of murderers even considered, when the important issues facing families of murder victims are ignored?

There was a time when the community responded to victims of crimes with sympathy and shock that such a thing could happen. How has the community changed? Crime, especially murder, has become so common place it takes something particularly gruesome, such as the recent mass murderer captured in Milwaukee, to capture our attention. Once captured our attention is enslaved by the killer. The victims and the families of the victims are forgotten.

Robert Glushek, editor of Victims of Violence Report, on victims and the community:

"Victims are not non-persons. They were and are vibrant human beings with dreams, pains, plans and hope for a better future. They were and are our neighbours, friends, lovers, wives, mothers, fathers, children, brothers and sisters. Their untimely and always brutal ends do not merit but our passing and brief attention. Our sympathy and our empathy is short-lived. We cannot face them. Instead we dwell on the killers."

Too much money and time is being spent on the criminal while nothing is spent on the victims.

Again Robert Glushek;

"If we focus our attention and resources on the victims of destructive criminal behavior, rather than on the criminal, then perhaps, the lesson our government will be giving our youth is that it does care for its law abiding citizens. That crime and criminals are unwanted in our society. That we, as a people, genuinely care for one another."

## Letters to the Editor

The Terrace Bay Schreiber News welcomes letters to the editor on any subject.

Letters must be signed and have the phone number and address of the author for verification. We will not knowingly print false libelous or anonymous comments.

Letters to the Editor are important to community newspapers. They serve to reflect opinions of members of the community we serve. However, we must insist on these rules to ensure that this very important forum is used responsibly.

Letters can be mailed to the News, Box 579, Terrace Bay, P0T 2W0. or dropped off at the News office, 13 Simcoe Plaza in Terrace Bay.



# The camcorder fad

Got your camcorder yet? If not, I figure there's just you and me left, chum. Camcorders are the fastest selling item down at my local camera shop and that's pretty well the story right across the country. Customers are snapping up camcorders like whiskeyjacks at a bush barbecue. I went to a wedding last weekend. Every third guest was coming on like Francis Ford Coppola, prowling around the reception with camcorders screwed to their eyesockets, each trying to find a special angle or a unique shot. The world's gone video camera crazy.

I don't figure I'll ever buy one. I'd have to sponsor a Taiwanese factory hand to come over and brief me every time I wanted to use the thing. Here's a brochure description of a new camcorder I could call mine for a mere \$1699.99.

AFM Hi-Fi with built-in Stereo Mic. 8:1 power zoom lens with Macro. 4 Mode Program AE (Auto Exposure). Variable High Speed Shutter (27 speeds, up to 1/10,000 sec.) Clean/Still/Slow/Frame Advance. 2-Page Digital Superimposer.

I don't know if they're selling me a video camera or a Chalk River Atom Smasher.

This is bewildering stuff for a guy who was raised on the Kodak Brownie Box camera. The Kodak Brownie, I recall, had precisely three features: a knob that you cranked to advance the film, a hole that you pointed at whatever you were taking a picture of; and a hole that you peered into to make sure your subject was centred, smiling and not picking its nose.

And that was it! A camera so simple a chimpanzee could operate it. Compare that to the above-mentioned camcorder, which has lenses and eyepieces and microphones and display panels and more buttons, dials, knobs, turrets, bells and whistles than the dashboard of the Millennium Falcon.

Doesn't seem to faze the younger generation, though. They've taken to camcorders as easily

and enthusiastically as my generation took to Elvis. In parts of the U.S. kids are allowed to hand in "video" term papers now. They go through encyclopedia film footage stored on optical disc, dub off what they want, edit the result, throw on a voiceover narration and, hey presto! A term paper, hi-tech 90's style.

This year, some Calgary schoolkids got to commute in comfort aboard "video buses" equipped with video monitors and VCRs.

Which means that students with their own camcorders could watch replays of recess all the way home from school.

That's another reason I don't plan to buy a camcorder. I think it's a fad. It's going to go the way of the sack dress and the hula hoop. Because ultimately all the camcorder offers is replays. And how many of those can you watch?

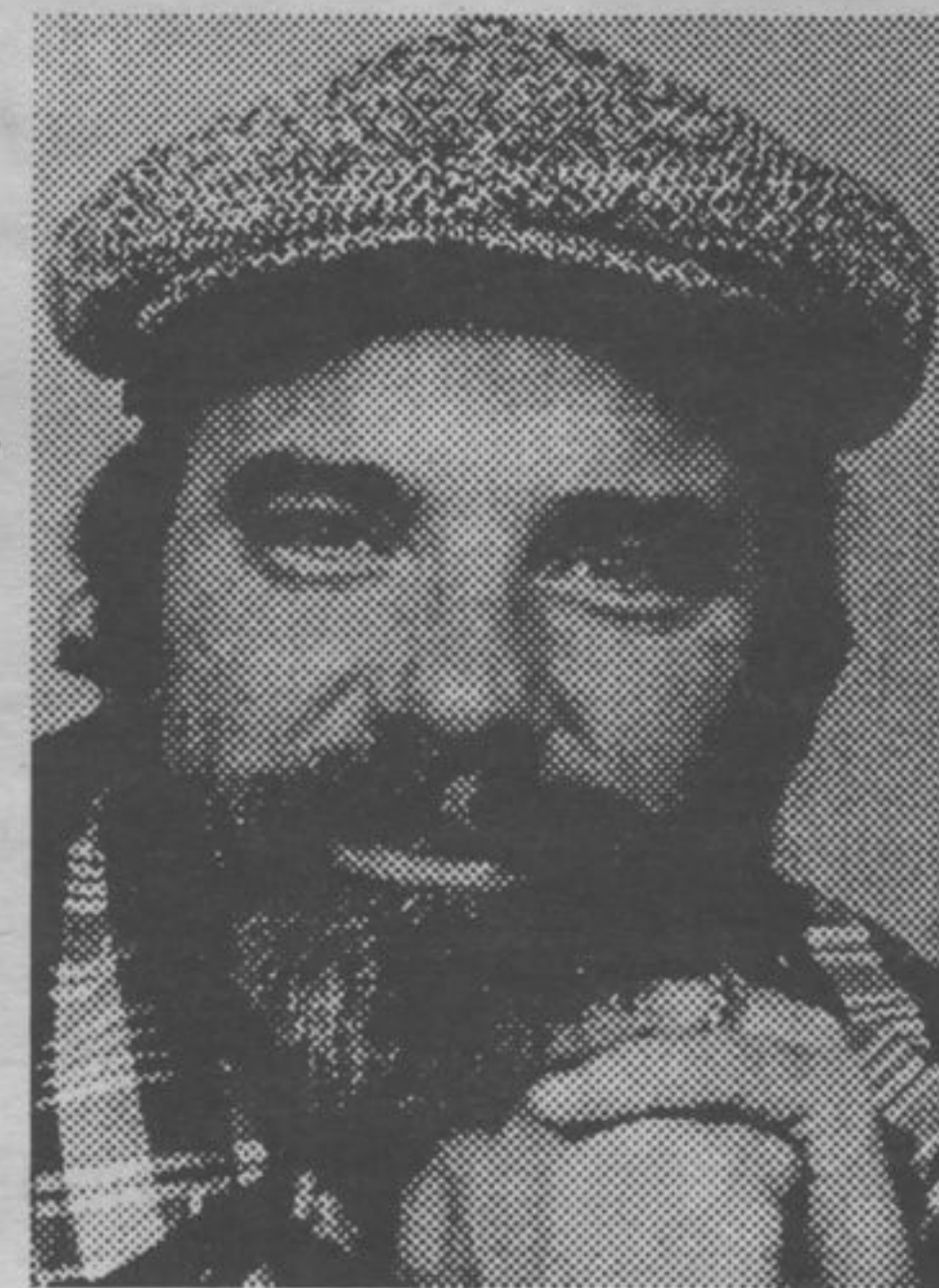
Sure, the baby's first steps, the graduation ceremony, Niagara Falls, weddings, picnics...but then what?

Life is not about reruns. It's about going on, not living in the past.

Carlton Fisk knows that. Back in the mid-seventies Fisk belted a homer in a World-Series game that became a classic, like Bobby Orr's floating-through-the-air Stanley Cup winning goal. Since then, Fisk's famous home run has been a replay feature of just about every baseball retrospective aired on TV. I've seen it dozens of times. Bet you have too.

But Carlton Fisk hasn't. He refuses to watch it. "I turn it off or go out of the room whenever it comes along" he says. "I want to keep it fresh in my head. I want to keep hold of the memory of what it felt like, as opposed to what it looks like on the screen."

Ah. What it felt like. A wise man, that Mister Fisk. Wouldn't be surprised to learn that he doesn't even own a camcorder.



**Arthur Black**