

Our Opinion

Additional red tape won't help anyone

Adding layers of bureaucracy is usually not best the way to deal with problems. In fact, the *There ought to be a law!* mentality is an easy way out for governments who don't want to deal with the underlying causes of a problem.

The case of the Toronto Police is a good example. The decision to make officers file a report, not when they fire their guns, but every time they draw their guns, is quite simply a bad idea. It doesn't deal with the real problem, and, much worse, may cost an officer his or her life.

The new regulation follows on the heels of a couple of police shootings last year of unarmed civilians, who also happened to be minorities. The incidents deepened the already deep mistrust of the police among ethnic communities in Toronto, particularly in the black community.

No matter what anyone might say, the new rules are aimed at encouraging police to draw their weapons less often, and in doing so, preventing the types of incidents that have occurred over the last few years. But the new rules don't deal with the real problem—the lack of trust between the police and the people they protect.

Economic hard times always hurt minorities harder. And it doesn't matter what race you are, if you're poor, you're more likely to commit a crime. So the police have become accustomed to associating certain groups with crime. When that happens, you have a problem.

What the government needs to do is work with community leaders to open up lines of communication. For example in Halifax, police have opened up an office in the poorer section of the city. They have also reinstated foot patrols to allow officers to get to know the people they are policing on a personal level. The idea is that the community is more likely to trust the police if they know the officers by name; and, in turn, the police won't feel as threatened working in the area if they know the people they are protecting.

Another must is increasing minority hiring of police officers. The Toronto force has to better reflect the community it's serving, and if there are qualified people who fit that requirement, hiring them is also a step in the right direction.

There's no denying these approaches take more time and are more difficult to accomplish than passing a new law. But at least they confront the cause of the violence and mistrust, not just the symptoms. There is a temptation on both sides to see the other as a dangerous enemy. But the new regulation in Toronto will likely only increase tension, not relieve it.

In my opinion, community leaders, the police force and the province should work together to come up with imaginative solutions that tackle real issues. Ideally, poverty and racism should be wiped out, and reducing the mistrust between the police and minorities advances that goal.

Unfortunately, all we have now is another meaningless form to process and file.

Darren MacDonald



Arthur may be changing his name to "Snores in Church" or "Walks about with fly unzipped"

The first people of Canada attached a lot more importance to names than we do. In the Old Days, back before we took away their land and rewarded them with a lifetime supply of Bibles, Indians thought long and hard about what they would call their children.

They want to reflect the personality. Thus, it could be months—in some cases years—before an Indian assumed his given name. Look at the hero in that Hollywood hit movie last year. He was a middle-aged U.S. Cavalryman before the Indians finally got around to naming him "Dances with Wolves".

Well, what's good enough for Kevin Costner is good enough for me. I want a name change.

And I'm not fussy. You can call me Fumbles With Keyboard or Snores In Church or He Who Walks About With Fly Unzipped. I don't care what you call me.

As long as it isn't Arthur.

I'm sick of Arthur. I've been lugging it around for 49 years now, and I never liked it.

Mind you, I hated it even more when I was a kid. Back then I was "Artie".

It is extremely difficult to establish one's status as a major teenage sex symbol when the family telephone rings, and your sister answers it, then yells "Artie, some girl wants to talk to you!"

It got worse. Later, I spent a couple of years in England and heard how plummy, upper class Brits attacked my moniker.

"Awwwwww thuh" they called me. Sounded vaguely like a sea lion with indigestion.

Could be worse. At least my parents didn't name me Attila. Or Adolph. Or Oswald, Lee or Harvey.

Names are fickle. Very few American parents are naming their children George, these days. Just as on this side of the border, newborn males sporting the name of Brian are noticeably scarce.

"Arthur" doesn't carry such a tattered pedigree. Au contraire. There's Artie Shaw and

Artur Schopenhauer and Arturo Toscanini.

Not to mention loveable old king Arthur.

And then of course, there's our great moment of glory in Wardsville, Ontario. True story: Back in the summer of 1983, a government bureaucrat—the assistant deputy minister in the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture—wrote a letter to all the municipal clerks in the province. Purpose: to ask each clerk to "submit a short brief or letter concerning the Arts in their municipality—how they are regarded, how they are funded, what effect they have on the life of the economy of the municipality..."

This is one letter he got back:

"Dear Sir:

Reference your letter dated 10 August 1983 requesting information on the Arts in our municipality.

We are pleased to advise that we have four:

- Art Harold
- Art Morgan
- Art Marks
- Art Sweet

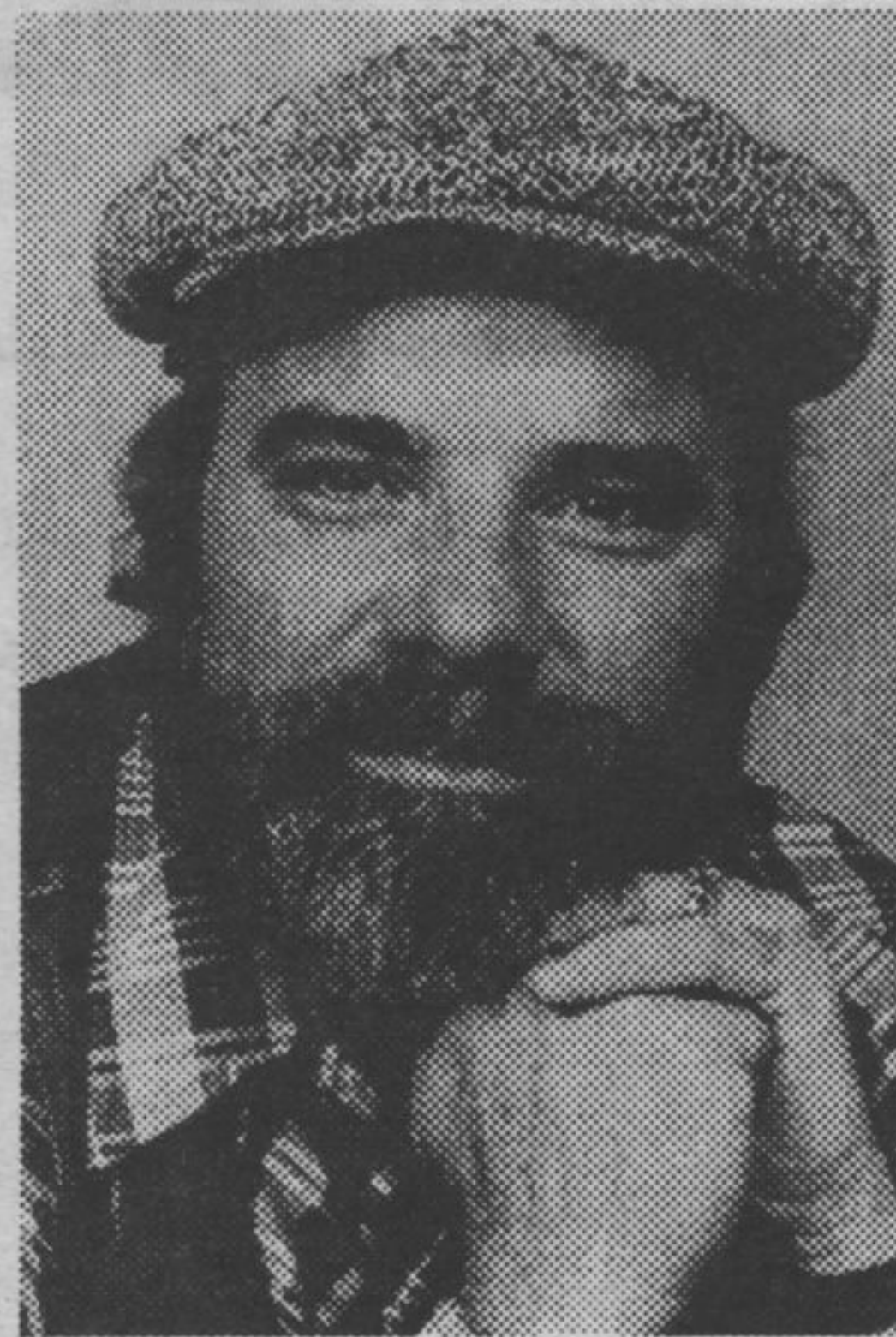
They are all extremely well regarded in the community. They are mostly funded

by Old Age Security Pension and Canada Pension, and all contribute to the economy in their day-to-day living.

We are pleased that you are interested in our Arts. However, we have many other names that also deserve recognition, such as William, Charles, Henry, etc, particularly many of the feminine gender, Mary Helen, Ellen, etc. We would be pleased to forward you a full list if you so wish.

Yours truly,
Harold Turton,
Clerk,
Village of Wardsville"

There's my answer. I don't have to change my name. I'll just move to Wardsville, where we Arts are really appreciated.



Arthur Black

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EDITORS
Cindy Laundry
Darren MacDonald
OFFICE / ADMIN.
& Circulation
Clara Dupuis

ADVERTISING
Ad. Manager
Linda Harbinson
Ad. Consultant
Cheryl Kostecki

PRODUCTION
& Quality Control
Supervisor
Heather Michon

PUBLISHER...A. Sandy Harbinson

Local offices are located at 145 Railway Street, Nipigon, Ontario P0T 2J0 (807) 887-3583 fax 887-3720 and Highway 17 & Mill Road, Terrace Bay, Ontario P0T 2W0 (807) 825-3747 fax 825-9233
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