

Weekender

# Comment

## Keep ban on death penalty

The issue of capital punishment will probably be raised in the House of Commons during the next few months. It seems that certain members feel that the death penalty should be returned in Canada.

They point to the lack of deterrents in our current system and the need for tougher penalties for murders. However, there is no evidence that violent crime is increasing at an alarming rate in Canada.

The murder rate has remained relatively constant and even killings of police officers are rare — despite a spate of the police killings in 1984 and 1985.

Although there is an emotional appeal in favor of capital punishment — a feeling that murder rates the ultimate in punishment, especially in the death of a police officer — reason must prevail.

All the studies show that capital punishment is not a deterrent and there seems to be no reason to reopen the issue now.

Our MPs could better spend their time on more pressing issues.



## Friends are keeping mum lately

I guess it had to happen. I think the clincher was when the Weekender's circulation went up to 30,000 recently. Suddenly, everywhere I go, people suffer instant amnesia, totally forgetting the conversations they were engaged in.

My team mates on the Monday night men's league team that I play for are no longer talking about the incredible stag party they put on for their kid brother, their golf weekends with the boys in South Carolina, or the girls they knew before they met Mrs. Right.

Local businessmen who used to love to relate their zany experiences back in the days when I was one of them, are bolting to the back room when I show up in their stores looking for some idle chit chat.

It seems they are all suffering from 'expose-phobia', the fear of having one's indiscretions made public knowledge by a columnist desperate for an off beat individual to make fun of.



Now I've been selling all my life, so rejection is something I've gotten used to. I can learn to live with being given the bum's rush by friends, neighbors and businessmen.

However, when my own family starts exhibiting guarded behavior in my presence, I guess it is high time I reconsidered my strategy as to how to go about gathering source material for this weekly dissertation.

I had suspected something was amiss when both my kids rented safety deposit boxes and started stashing them with questionable materials like old photographs that captured them in less than

flattering situations, and the book that contains all of the humorous word combinations they came up with when they were learning to talk.

Outrageous suggestions of alternative child raising methods were the next to go. I used to look forward to these little gems of bent logic put forward by my offspring, challenging Mom and Dad's "anachronistic" views on such issues as bed time, homework, candy consumption, and proper behavior during church service.

But the gravity of the problem didn't really hit me until I picked up my son's most recent written

composition, anxious to read the latest creative outpourings of his fertile 11-year-old mind. Alas, this is what the little guy had felt compelled to write:

"My dad's got a column. That might not sound like a good reason to be nervous, but it is."

You see, if I do something dumb, it might end up in the column. Because of this, no one's been doing any dumb things around our house anymore, and Dad has to resort to other things to write about, like Blue Jay home openers, missionaries, and salesmen.

He'll probably do one on the dangers of exploration of my sister's bedroom — a three part series. It will take that long to get through all the stuff in there.

Not as many people come around anymore. Nobody wants to be quoted in his column. He already made a fool of me, and I didn't even do anything. When I was two years old, I was, well, chubby. So, in front of all of York

Region, he called me my old nickname, Lumpy. I'll never live that one down.

I had bitter thoughts, but came right back. I have to stay on his good side if I'm going to play first base this year. He's my baseball coach."

Now if I am truly going to turn over a new leaf, it should be pointed out that I did in fact get my son's permission to use his composition. All it took was a little bribe. He gets to play first base for three games, guaranteed, even if he ends up playing it the way George Chuvalo used to box — with his face — he's still my man. Fair enough?

In the meantime, it looks like the gravy train has ground to a halt. No more "free lunch" column ideas. From here on, I'll be forced to go out on the prowl and hunt down my subject matter, just like a real journalist. I might even have to do some research! Chalk up another one for the "all good things must come to an end" department.

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