

## IN OTHER WORDS

Columns and Letters to the Editor

# Torture in the 'new residential schools'

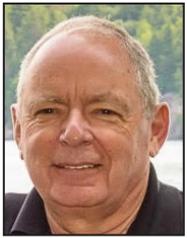
**T**HE TORTURE OF ADAM CAPAY in Thunder Bay Jail says as much about how politicians are failing us as anything else happening in the world today.

As much as Brexit, as much as the U.S. election nightmare, as much as the surge of the Pirate Party in Iceland. As much as any of the political upheavals created by people rising up and demanding better government and better politicians dedicated to providing it.

Capay, a young man from Lac Seul First Nation near Sioux Lookout, has been in solitary confinement for more than four years. The lights are on 24 hours a day in his Plexiglas cell, making it impossible for him to know if it is night or day. He has been in this cell 52 months, awaiting trial for the killing of another inmate.

Ontario's politicians and bureaucrats are yip yapping the usual lines, calling the Capay case unacceptable and not nice. Premier Wynne calls it disturbing.

Well Ms. Premier, here's what I call it: outrageous, evil, cruel and criminal. Clearly it is a violation of international laws regarding torture.



**JIM POLING SR.**  
From Shaman's Rock

At first word of the Capay treatment Wynne should have been on an airplane to Thunder Bay to personally manage and correct this outrageous wrong. The premier's mind, however, can't seem to get outside downtown Toronto and its pressing issues of gender neutral language and bicycle lanes.

Especially sickening is that the Ontario government knew about Capay's torture for a long time and did nothing. Protocols for solitary confinement mean that dozens of monthly reports on Capay's segregation were sent, or should have been sent, to the ministry of institutional services.

The dirt only hit the fan when Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Renu Mandhane was tipped to Capay's plight. She visited him and witnessed the conditions in which he is being held.

A bright spot in this ugly story is that a jail guard pushed it into the spotlight by informing Mandhane. That's heartening because corrections officials have not been known to show much empathy for aboriginal inmates.

I recall vividly being slipped a plain brown envelope many years ago that contained a photocopy of a top-secret Northwest Territories prison training manual. The manual informed new prison staff that aboriginals are "lazy, uncreative, unthrifty and adolescent," traits that come from their "mongol origins."

Hopefully the sentiments in that training manual have long disappeared, but the shockingly high rates of aboriginal imprisonment have not.

Almost 25 per cent of inmates in Canadian federal, provincial and territorial lockups are aboriginal. Aboriginals are 10 times more likely to be imprisoned in Canada than non-indigenous people. Ninety per cent of the inmates at Thunder Bay Jail are aboriginal.

Our prisons and jails are the new residential schools.

The Capay story shows us clearly the political rot in Ontario and the urgent need to overhaul our democracy.

Much of the rot can be attributed to swelling numbers of career politicians whose decisions too often are based on re-election, rather than the concerns and needs of the people. They are masters of the political game, when they should be masters of the art of management.

Good managers lead from out front and recognize problems before they become crises. Letting a young man sit in a brightly-lighted Plexiglas cell for more than four years is managing from the bleachers instead of being on the field.

This Ontario government, and others of the last three decades or more, have demonstrated that they are incapable of managing a peanut stand.

The way to get fewer career politicians and better government is for people to become involved in the political process. The next Ontario election is in 2018 and people need to become involved now in the nomination process.

That means deciding what type of people we need in government and encouraging them to run. It means challenging the existing nomination practices and, if necessary, tossing people who have been a political party's choice.

This is not about party politics. It is about getting into government people dedicated to working for the people, not the party. If that means people without political party affiliations, all the better.

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### letters to the editor

## Remembrance Day memories

To the Editor:

I'm writing in response to your invitation to send in photos of family members who were veterans. I couldn't find the picture of my father I was looking for but I did find other things: his beret, his knapsack, his medals, his "dogtag", booklets describing the use and mechanism of machine guns, a copy of *Canadian Soldiers' Song Book*.

My father never talked about his experience in the Second World War. He was a pharmacist, working for Eaton's in Toronto, when he enlisted in 1942. He was 34 years old and engaged to be married. First he went to Camp Borden for training. In February 1943 he was notified that he would be sailing to Europe. He and my mother married "on Embarkation Leave." Their honeymoon was a weekend in Niagara Falls.

Little did they know that it would be more than three years before they saw each other again. I can't imagine how difficult that must have been. Another item I found in the box gave me a glimpse into that time. It was a little black notebook. On the first page, my mother wrote, "Record of letters and parcels sent to My husband - Pte Coburn L.W., R.C.A.M.C. No. 1 Canadian General Reinforcement Unit, Canadian Army Overseas". She numbered every letter and parcel, and she kept track of when she sent them, and my father wrote back telling her when he received them. Letter #1 was sent on March 10/43; letter #503 was sent on February 6/46.

The first parcel she sent was sent on March 22/43. It contained "Underwear, Notepaper, Cigarettes, Figs, Kisses, Willards Mints, Bovril, Cheese, Tin of Tomato Juice and Hot Chocolate." Father received it on May 6. The last parcel she described was #62, sent November 15/45.

In another part of the notebook is a record of all the letters and gifts my father sent to my mother. He sent flowers at Easter, earrings for her birthday, roses on their anniversary, photographs, and a perfume bottle from Belgium.

What devotion; what discipline - recording every letter, every gift. I imagine it must have been her way to keep him close, to try to keep him safe. I suppose thousands of women did the same thing. My partner, Eric, tells me that his aunt and her husband invented their own secret code to get by the censors. One of their code words, included in a harmless-looking sentence in a letter, would let her know what part of England he was in, or where he might be going.

There is another box in the cupboard - a small black case. In it are all those letters from my father. I never knew about that box until I found it after my parents had both died. Each letter is actually a reduced copy of what my father had written on a standard letter form. I suppose it was read by a censor to make sure that there was nothing in it that revealed the Allies' secrets, and then photographed. Each letter is in a small tan-coloured envelope, folded so that the mailing address can be seen through the opening on the front. I imagine the thrill my mother had each time one of those envelopes appeared in the mail. And once she started keeping them how could she ever throw them out? That case came with them when they moved to Minden in 1949.

So this is what I can offer for this year's Remembrance Day edition. Thank you for the nudge to dig out those boxes and think back to what life was like 70-some years ago... on the "Front" and back here at home.

**Carolynn Coburn**  
Eagle Lake Road

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## IN OTHER WORDS

Columns and Letters to the Editor

# Stuart McLean's illumination

**N**EWSPAPERS OF A DEATH DOES NOT ALWAYS bring only dark sadness. Sometimes it brings illumination.

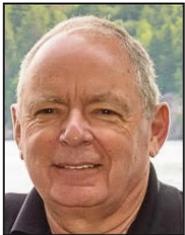
That was the case last week when we learned that Stuart McLean, an unpretentious Canadian icon, had passed away. He died at 68 of cancer.

McLean's death came at a time when we needed illumination. Our prime minister had just returned from Washington where his visit was considered of so little importance that they forgot his first name. Sean Spicer, Trump's vacuous press secretary, called him Joe Trudeau.

That, along with the avalanche roar of attention paid to Trump's megalomania, fed our Canadian inferiority complex. Once again overshadowed by the loud and hugely important cousin to the south, our Canadian littleness diminished to the size of a crumb fallen from a table.

However, the sorrowful news of McLean's passing reminded us that small and unassuming always trumps egotism and braggadocio. It reminded us that we are a humble people, willing to listen, willing to help and not afraid to laugh at ourselves.

It was indeed an illumination. The kind of illumination that McLean transmitted across the nation through his Vinyl Café variety radio show.



**JIM POLING SR.**  
From Shaman's Rock

McLean was a CBC radio and TV reporter who moved away from covering the so-called big and important issues concerning Canadians. He began reporting stories that might be considered less newsworthy. They were stories about everyday folks and provided insights into ordinary Canadians and their communities.

He started the Vinyl Café show in 1994. It was presented before live audiences in smaller communities across the country, and from time to time on the BBC and dozens of public radio stations in the United States. It toured 100 days each year, broadcasting

roughly a quarter of those on Saturdays.

The Vinyl Café was a fictional second-hand record store owned by Dave – he never had a last name – a bumbler who too often found himself in a pickle. His wife Morley was the sensible partner, usually extracting Dave from his predicaments.

The show also featured musical entertainment performed by lesser known musicians and McLean reading essays about communities and letters from the ordinary people who lived in them. People who worked with him said he regarded his essays as journalism and did extensive research before writing them.

"He reminded us that everything is important, even little things, and that means we're all important," Jess Milton, his producer for the last 13 years, was quoted in the *New York Times*' story on McLean's death.

The Vinyl Café told us about and helped us to understand parts of our country that are seldom reported on.

I recall first meeting Stuart McLean in the hallway at a broadcast industry meeting in the early 1980s, long before he invented the Vinyl Café. He reminded me of an Ichabod Crane character, long-limbed and angular in brown corduroy pants and a tweed jacket hanging off his frame. Hanging from one shoulder was a leather-cased tape recorder - a Sony TC-110 if my memory is correct – on which he captured his interviews.

Stuart McLean moved into fictional storytelling on the Vinyl Café, but he remained a reporter.

He was like thousands of journalists in Canada and the U.S. who work at (in many cases for small money) honestly and fairly reporting the theatre of our lives. They vigorously seek out facts and balanced opinions to get as close to the truth as is possible.

Sometimes parts of society do not like to hear the truth and reporters are given the blame for telling it. But that's just part of the job.

That's why it was an insult to Stuart's memory when Donald Trump this week called journalists the enemies of the American people. And most assuredly he meant that for journalists everywhere, including Canada.

Stuart McLean, through his reporting and his trademark storytelling, illuminated our lives and made us feel proud to be Canadians. He did that in a folksy, positive and humorous way.

Donald Trump, evidently suffering the advanced stages of malignant narcissism, makes the entire world feel afraid. Some worry that someday he will have us feeling like radioactive ash.

And he says journalists are the enemy?

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Blue skies set off the white of snow on a barn on Bobcaygeon Road in Minden. Photo taken by Guenter Horst

## Cut the cheese...

**A** FEW YEARS AGO a personal training client came in to report that his doctor told him to "cut the cheese". Of course, I didn't quite know how to respond to that until we figured out that his doctor actually said he should "cut back on the cheese." It's amazing what can get lost in translation. My client's first language is French.

In addition to providing us with a laugh, his doctor gave him a great piece of advice. He said "Cheese should be eaten as champagne is drank." That is brilliant advice. We are consuming far too much cheese these days.

An ounce of cheddar cheese contains approximately 115 calories. What does an ounce look like? It's about the size of 4 dice, or one nine-volt battery. A medium sized banana has 105 calories. In addition to the difference in the volume of food, the nutritional make-up between the two is vastly different. The killer for the typical piece of cheese is the fat content. And all we need to know is that it is the bad fat we're talking about.

"Living in the lap of luxury isn't bad except that you never know when luxury is going to stand up." - Orson Welles

I can't remember exactly when the cheese craze started but there was an evolution that led to it being everywhere, and in huge quantities. Try to think of the last time you went to a restaurant and attempted to order something

without cheese. Or even with just one type of high quality cheese as an ingredient. It is available, but so is pizza with a crust stuffed with cheese. Right about now you may be craving melted cheese on something, and that has nothing to do with being hungry. And that is exactly what the food industry is banking on. We're addicted to the stuff! That is both sad and true.



**Laurie Sweig**  
Practical Fitness

Where do we go from here? How about we set up a challenge for the next week we limit our cheese consumption to one nine-volt battery a day? Sure things may not taste as good initially but you will eat them anyway. And the amazing thing is, you'll be healthier for it.

Something to think about.

Laurie Sweig is a certified personal trainer and Spinning instructor. She is one of the founders of The Point for Fitness. [www.the-pointforfitness.com](http://www.the-pointforfitness.com).



## Carquest champs

On Jan. 31 the Minden Curling Club held the annual Minden Carquest Senior Men's Bonspiel. The overall winning team, and winner of the Carquest trophy, was from the Haliburton Curling Club. The team members consisted of, from left to right, Mitch Stephen-vice, Rick Dingman-second, Dave Ogilvie-lead and Don Wetmore-skip. Congratulations to Don and his team. Submitted by Bert Kennedy

## IN OTHER WORDS

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# My first 100 days

**J**UDGING THE FIRST 100 DAYS in office is ridiculous, artificial and something invented by the news media.

That's how U.S. President Forrest Trump sees it. I feel it is important however, as president of my family, to review my performance for the first 100 days of each year.

Trump's first 100 days have been fantastic, spectacular, unbelievably good, the best of any president ever and best of any to come. He instantly achieved his prediction of being "the greatest jobs president that God ever created."

My 100 days report card is not nearly that effusive because I don't have his vast store of superlatives. But I can report some modest successes, and some failures.

First, in the area of foreign affairs, I had none. In fact I didn't even have any domestic affairs.

I did travel abroad for consultations. I went to California to ask my granddog Rusty to join my cabinet of advisors. When it comes to cabinet advisors, I pick only the best of the best.

Rusty is a pretty smart cookie with ideas on how to make life even better for the family pets. He is thrilled to be in my inner circle because the publicity will boost sales of a new dog food that he is promoting.

I also travelled to Hamilton for talks with Louie, my first great-granddog. He is a chocolate brown lab and advised me that more money must be spent to ensure a constant supply of tennis balls are available at the cottage shoreline.

Over in Mississauga I met with Georgia, my Great Dane granddog and senior special advisor. She told me that our family congress would vote for a budget that includes money for a new, larger and more comfortable couch. Grandcat Rainbow agreed wholeheartedly.

Money has been a problem during the first 100 days. The nine-year-old presidential pickup truck needed major repairs. So did two of the presidential teeth.

Despite these financial setbacks I remain steadfast in my promise to build a wall to keep the red squirrels out of our great cottage land. They are aggressive, noisy good-for-nothings. Bad, bad. Totally destructive.

Nobody builds walls better than me because I have fantastic ability and I am really smart. Squirrels are dumb and actually I would like to see them ride the MOAB into squirrel heaven.

Unfortunately the courts stupidly have ruled that red squirrels are a protected species and must be treated nicely. Dumb. Really dumb. Judges need their heads examined.

Meanwhile, the first 100 days infrastructure program is running a bit behind. The new back window project and some other stuff are not completed yet.

These projects and the squirrel wall are making it difficult to bring in a balanced budget, which is a must because I am not allowed to increase our debt.

Ontario Premier Kathy says she is going to balance her budget despite millions of dollars of new vote-getting spending. She can do that because when she wants to spend more, she borrows more.

Her debt, now more than \$300 billion, equals the debt of all the other nine provinces combined. Interest charges on that debt are \$12 billion a year.

If I run up too much debt, a guy with a head bandana and tattoos arrives in a tow truck and takes away my pickup. And the bank kicks me out of my house. Then there's nothing to do except wander into the woods, sit on a tree stump and listen to the birds.

I can report that I did file my income tax return ahead of this week's deadline. I am willing to make my returns public in case anyone out there needs a really good laugh.

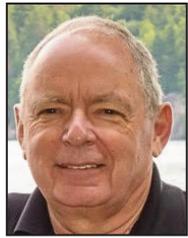
Overall, it's been a pretty good first 100 days. However, I didn't realize that being president of the family was so complicated. Hockey tournaments to drive to, baseball practices to attend. School concerts. Easter gatherings. Helping to pick out birthday and anniversary cards.

The media doesn't understand all the complications I must deal with.

Reporters are meanies who say everything I do is wrong. I'd like to hit them so hard their heads spin. But then my editor might not let me write this column anymore.

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**JIM POLING SR.**

From Shaman's Rock

# Spring clean up: Drink up!

**I**N THIS FINAL segment of the Spring Clean-up Series, I am going to rant about hydration. This is my favourite topic. I believe that our bodies are at their best when they are well hydrated.

There have been many discussions around whether or not consuming liquids like coffee, tea, or juice contribute to hydration. I like to stick with the basics, and the most basic is water. That's two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom (please note, that is extent of my chemistry knowledge). It's simple. Our bodies are made up of approximately 60 per cent water. That water is constantly being expelled through various functions. It is best to replace it with just plain, ordinary, tasteless, calorie-less water!

To understand the importance of being well hydrated let's review the downfalls of dehydration. At the very least, it is uncomfortable, and at most it is dangerous. Mild dehydration may result in thirst, headaches, fatigue and dizziness. Extreme dehydration can lead to heat injury (heat exhaustion), kidney problems and seizures. With these risk factors in mind doesn't it make sense to drink more water?

There are huge benefits to drinking wa-

ter. It will boost your energy. It helps with weight management. We are often thirsty when we think we are hungry. It flushes out the bad stuff your body produces to keep things functioning. As part of that equation, it helps with the digestion process and

keeps you regular. It also contributes to keeping joints lubricated, and muscles more elastic. That means reducing the risk of joint pain.

I have heard over and over again how water is tasteless. Some folks even hate the tasteless taste. Instead of reaching for one of those chemically enhanced beverages why not add something good to your drink? Lemons

and limes are the obvious choices. How about a piece of an orange? Or even a slice of cucumber? Mint is also good. Whatever it takes, drink up. Sure there may be more interruptions with trips to the water closet, but isn't it worth it for improved health?

Something to think about.



**LAURIE SWEIG**

Special to the Timers

Laurie Sweig is a certified personal trainer and spinning instructor. She is one of the founders of The Point for Fitness: [www.thepointforfitness.com](http://www.thepointforfitness.com).



## Flooding in Minden Hills

Cynthia Kocot sent in this photo of flooding along Bethel Road on Monday, May 1. Downpours on Sunday and Monday washed out several roads around the Highlands.

## Junior book of the month

**Nelly Gnu and Daddy Too** by Anna Dewdney

When Nelly Gnu and Daddy build a house out of a cardboard box, it seems to be missing something. So they go on a trip to the hardware store to find all the things they need to make Nelly's cardboard box house a cardboard box home. In this rhyming board book for little ones, wee readers join Nelly Gnu and Daddy too on their daddy-daughter day of adventure!

*Nelly Gnu and Daddy Too*, a board book by Anna Dewdney, is available to reserve at the Haliburton County Public Library.

