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Terror in Paris

I'm trying to resist the urge to be angry

I can't help but be troubled as I write this. It's Sunday; two days after a handful of young men staged a terrible attack on Paris.

There's still a lot we don't know: Was it masterminded by the Islamic State, as the violent regime has claimed? If so, how and what does it mean that the IS can strike at a distance? Is this the end of open borders and freedom of movement?

It's easy to be sucked into a feedback loop of fear.

More than 120 people dead, another 100 at death's door; more than 300 injured. So much fear and misery caused by so few.

I'm writing this on my daughter's laptop, sitting comfortably on my bed with a hot cup of coffee. I'm thinking about my family. My wife and I have two children: a boy, 14, and a girl, 10.

Last night, both kids had friends sleep over. It was a fun night. We ate pizza. I took the kids to the corner store here in Coniston to buy a few treats. While the



On the level
Mark Gentili

kids hung out, my wife and I sat on our bed and watched TV. She had a headache, so I massaged her neck and shoulders.

It was a pretty typical, relaxing Saturday evening.

I used to be an angry young man, probably like many of you. I raged against the inequalities of the world, against the corruption of government, against the corporations that seem to exert an inordinate amount of power and control.

My anger was directed at those perceived injustices (some real, some imagined) I saw around me — pretty typical thinking for a twentysomething Canadian.

I was angry, yes, but it was a typical western kind of young, white man's anger in that my life was relatively comfortable and easy.

I could be angry and still look forward to a life of prosperity and relative ease.

Had I been born in another part of the world things might have been different. My anger might not have been of the philosophical kind.

So as I sat on my bed with my wife, while my children amused themselves with their friends, I thought about the thousands of people in France out enjoying a Parisian Friday night and how it had been a pretty typical, relaxing evening for them, too. If only it had stayed that way.

I mourn the dead and the injured. My thoughts are with

Anger

Anger leads to irrationality and the slaughter in Paris is irrationality writ large.

their families.

I look at the faces of my family and see the faces of the dead and dying on the streets of Paris and I wonder: How could anyone hate them? Their only crime was being born at the wrong time in the wrong country with the wrong culture.

I thought, too, about how that relaxing evening was shattered by a small group of angry young men, men who are angry about the perceived injustices of the world (both real and imagined).

And I have to wonder how the world-view of these attackers became so twisted that in doing evil, they really and truly believed they were doing good. It's perverse.

My atheism aside, it saddens

me that they've taken what's good about religion — empathy, sympathy, charity, humility — and turned it into something bleak and dangerous.

Rest assured, this attack will beget more violence. France has called it an act of war. The dead and wounded in France will lead to dead and wounded in the Middle East, most of them, sadly, will be civilians who will be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I'm troubled and I'm saddened. But I'm doing my best not to be angry. Anger leads to irrationality and the slaughter in Paris is irrationality writ large.

I'm doing my best not to think in terms of *us* and *them*, because those are artificial constructs. Genetically, there's only us.

The rest — language, culture, religion, skin-tone — is window-dressing. But we continue to kill each other for it anyway.

Mark Gentili is the managing editor of NorthernLife.ca.

IN FOCUS



Pining for warmer months

Chris Pritchard from Lively sent us a photo in August of a painted turtle in the Tyson Lake/Wolf Creek area, sunning on a log near Killarney. The first snowfall hit Sudbury Nov. 13, so we decided a bit of summer nostalgia was in order. Northern Life welcomes submissions of local photography for publication on this page. Send high-resolution images to apickard@northernlife.ca.

LETTERS

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Spend money on facilities, not another road

To our Community Leaders and Proponents of the Maley Drive Project:

I simply cannot understand the support for spending over \$80 million on building another road in this city when there are so many other uses for this kind of funding.

I have yet to speak to any individual who supports this project or to one who can give me a really good reason for making this project our city's priority.

As the parent of competitive swimmers, we have been all over this province for swim meets, and we have seen what other communities have provided for their citizens.

Here in Northern Ontario, a prime example can be found at the John Rhodes Community Center in Sault Ste. Marie.

Yes, you read that correctly. Sault Ste. Marie has an incredible multi-use facility for use by all kinds of community groups — athletic, artistic, senior-oriented, etc.

They are able to host all kinds of events that bring in hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars to the community annually.

Here in Sudbury, we've had billions of dollars come through this city thanks to the companies

formerly known as Inco and Falconbridge, and we couldn't even provide such a facility to our citizens.

Now that there "appears" to be some funding available, we are planning to build another road that will probably fall apart in a few years and will require further million dollar expenditures.

I would rather drive on bad roads that bring me to great sports facilities, arts centers and maybe even a conference centre than drive on perfect roads that bring me nowhere.

If we really want people to come here and stay long enough to raise their families and eventually retire here, then we should be spending these millions of dollars on better facilities for our citizens.

Nancy Deni
 Sudbury

Correction

In the Nov. 12 edition of Northern Life, the letter written by Eileen Anttila had a typo in the last paragraph. It should have read, "This mess is not the physicians' fault." Northern Life apologizes for the error.

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Public transportation

It's about time ON is let in from the cold

There's a distinct possibility that I'm stupid.

You see, I thought constructing, maintaining and managing transportation infrastructure — highways and the like — was part of the reason we invented governments. I thought part of that infrastructure included publicly funded transportation systems.

Funding public transportation systems makes economic sense. It's a generally safer way to travel. It helps minimize greenhouse gas emissions. And it's generally a cheaper way of moving resources to production centres and goods to market.

Premier Kathleen Wynne thinks so. Last April, she announced the Moving Ontario Forward plan, a \$31.5-billion promise to modernize that transportation infrastructure in Ontario.

GO Transit's share of that is \$16 billion to improve the speed and frequency of GO train trips in the GTA. GO's more than 60 million rides fund 80 to 85 per cent of its operating costs. Still, last year the province kicked in the \$160 mil-



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lion GO needed to make up the difference. The subsidy makes sense. Public transportation is important.

With the population of southern Ontario continually growing, getting more cars off the road should be a priority, and public transit does that.

Here's the thing though. While GO Transit gets billions, GO Transit's sister agency, responsible for public transportation in Northern Ontario, has had to fight for decades to stay afloat.

I've covered news in the North for 16 years. In that time, I've reported on nearly every route cancellation, fight for funds, latest government scheme, and faint glimmer of hope when it comes to Ontario Northland.

Ontario Northland's latest battle for existence began in 2012. That year, it received \$103 million in provincial subsidies, which included funding for its telecommunications arm, Ontera (sold to Bell Alliant in 2014, taking a \$61-million loss in the process — not kidding, look it up).

That was the same year the Liberals decided Ontario Northland wasn't worth the expense and said they were selling it off to shovel that \$103 million into the hole of Ontario's projected \$16-billion deficit.

The government eventually backed off. Instead, they added a few bus routes, killed the century-old Northlander passenger train and sold off Ontera. But Ontario Northland is still fighting for life.

I can't understand why this necessary service always seems to have a target on its back. Need

How daft

... The government spent \$6.5 million to get advice on whether to sell it, but only got \$6 million for the sale. You only do something that daft when you're playing poker with someone else's money.

proof? Look at a couple of fairly recent decisions.

That sale of Ontera? Besides losing its \$61-million value, the government spent \$6.5 million to get advice on whether to sell it, but only got \$6 million for the sale. You only do something that daft when you're playing poker with someone else's money.

Or try to wrap your head around this one. Ontario Northland pays half a million dollars a year in fees to use GO Transit terminals in southern Ontario — even though they're both provincial agencies.

Put another way, it's like a married couple with a joint bank account, but one member of the relationship has to pay the other for the privilege of sleeping in the marital bed. So one spouse withdraws money to pay the fee to the other spouse, who then deposits that money right back into the joint account.

Ontario Northland was created to open up the North to development. That job isn't done.

Northern Ontario shouldn't be grateful for receiving second-class service. And really, by rights shouldn't there be just one agency responsible for public transportation in this province, providing a comparable level of service across Ontario?

Why does GO Transit get to snuggle up by the fire, while Ontario Northland is left out in the cold? To me, a single transportation agency just makes sense.

Then again, maybe I'm stupid.

Mark Gentili is the managing editor of Northern Life and NorthernLife.ca.

IN FOCUS



High Falls

Bruce Gates sent us a landscape photograph taken of the rapids at the head of High Falls on the Onaping River, on Tuesday during a brief spell of blue sky. Northern Life welcomes submissions of local photography for publication on this page. Send high-resolution images to apickard@northernlife.ca.

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City's homeless should be one of our first priorities

Editor's note: The following letter is in response to managing editor Mark Gentili's column, "Someone needs to make a decision," published Jan. 12.

In Mark Gentili's Jan. 12th 'On the Level' article, the list of projects the City of Greater Sudbury has in the plans without any concrete means of achieving them laid out includes:

- creating 10,000 net new jobs by 2025 (ideally good, high paying jobs);
- attracting 30,000 new people to Sudbury;
- a healthy downtown;
- community amenities like a new Sudbury Arena;
- a multi-use arts and culture centre to house our city art gallery and the Sudbury Symphony.

One would imagine that some of these goals have had numerous visioning, strategic planning and consultation meetings along with the expenses that accompany them, yet, the goal remains unachieved, the main point Mark made in his article.

I would like to add to Mark's list. There have been many studies done on the homelessness and poverty situation in Sudbury. I'm thinking specifically of the research of Carol

Kauppi (Laurentian University), yet the issues remain. Why fund research if we don't go the next step and do something with it?

Please, could we first take care of the most disadvantaged among us before we move on? Our priorities need to be established. If we have a reputation for being a city where everyone belongs, is valued and cared for, I believe people will come to Sudbury, and Sudbury will grow and thrive!

We have a great city, but we can be better!

Karen Marcotte
 Sudbury

Why is the city picking on seniors?

I would like to add my own concerns to the opinions expressed in recent articles and letters to the editor regarding the issue of senior discounts and raising the age from 55 to 65.

People will definitely be hit hard and feel a negative impact when the city increases the eligible age considered to be a senior. And, such a drastic jump affects a large population here in Sudbury — particularly those living in surrounding towns who rely on bus service to downtown. The other drastic jump is the

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Ain't we got fun?

Sudbury: Chubby, chill and ready for anything

With tongue firmly planted in cheek, let me declare that we, as a community, might be staring down the barrel of the greatest community marketing ploy this city has ever seen. The question is, do we have the wherewithal to make it happen.

In yearly health data reports, Greater Sudburians are told we're sicker and fatter than the average Ontario resident. We have more cancer and we have more heart disease. We're told our children are sicker than the average, too.

To be honest, it's troubling to have to report on the state of our health here in Ontario's Northland every year, because the picture is always so dire. It always makes us sound, well, bad.

Our winters are longer and colder so we spend more time not moving than most residents of this province. We know what it's like to hunker down for warmth.

Our industries are mostly resource-based, which come with long, physical working hours, more possibility for on-



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Mark Gentili

the-job injuries and death (than, say, working in an office on Bay Street), more noxious fumes and dust ... you get the picture.

So, our health suffers. But we're northerners, right? We're not southern softies who don't know a core sample from an apple core. Do we let our generally poorer health get us down? Hell, no.

In fact, despite our generally poorer health, we love life. Remember that survey that came out last spring? It said Sudburians are gen-

erally extremely happy.

We don't let that dire health data depress us. We just smile and carry on. Of course, we smoke more cigarettes, use more drugs and drink more booze than southerners, which could account for our happier dispositions, I suppose.

But it could also be just a quality of our character: When it's time to work, we work. But when it's to play, we play — hard. We dive right in. Northerners know how to have a good time. We certainly don't need alcohol or drugs to do it, but we don't mind a little recreational lubrication either.

Speaking of lubrication, we learned this week that adult toy supplier PinkCherry.ca has released its ranking of the Canadian communities where it shipped the most of its wares, per capita, last year. And what do you know? Sudbury ranked third in the whole country.

I'm not sure if that distinction is dubious or not (but I'm leaning on the not side). From the comments on our website, NorthernLife.ca, it seemed most people who

Play time

When it's time to work, we work. But when it's to play, we play — hard. We dive right in. Northerners know how to have a good time.

responded took our penchant for sex toys as a point of pride.

So, not only do we work hard and play hard, when it comes time to get intimate, we know how to let the good times roll (or vibrate or warm up or what have you).

We shouldn't be embarrassed or ashamed. We should be using the health data to our benefit. Sure, Sudburians are chubbier and more intoxicated, but we're also more sexually adventurous and generally happier. To me, that says we know how to relax and we don't take ourselves too seriously. To me, that says we should acknowledge these facts and make them work for us.

“Sudbury: The Resourceful

City” is an OK slogan, if a little boring. Sure, we have a resource-based economy, but where's the fun in that?

How about “Sudbury: We don't judge” or “Sudbury: Come as you are” or “Sudbury: Just relax” — I'm telling you, we have a winner on our hands.

If we take these attributes and combine them into one unique marketing plan, we'll have more tourists and new residents than the King-sway has potholes. We've got the best urban amenities coupled with all the natural beauty right outside our door, combined with our predilection to relax and enjoy life — what more could people want?

“Sudbury: Anything goes” — I'm telling you it'd be huge.

Now, somebody pass me the chips and crack me a beer. I've got the munchies and I'm all out of batteries. (And again, just to be clear, tongue firmly planted in cheek.)

Mark Gentili is the managing editor of Northern Life and NorthernLife.ca.

IN FOCUS



Upsidedown downy

Chantal Chivot snapped this pic of a downy woodpecker finally getting its turn at the feeder. Northern Life welcomes submissions of local photography for publication on this page. Send high-resolution images to apickard@northernlife.ca.

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Time for Trudeau to make real positive changes

Editor's note: The following is an open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Your catchphrase, “Real change for the middle class” does not hold much weight when your tax break applies to those making \$44,000-plus a year. What about all of us earning much less and especially those on a fixed income?

Also, why was the Tax-Free Savings Account taken from \$10,000 and year to \$5,000 a year? This was one of the few vehicles available to the middle and lower class to squirrel away a few savings without worrying about the tax man.

Thanks for your “help.” I'm hoping you rethink your position and really make positive changes.

Richard Hogue
Dowling

City needs a transportation co-ordinator

Last weekend, while playing with my sons and their friend, I was approached by a police officer who insisted we play elsewhere.

She explained that the top of the hill we were sliding down was level with a busy road where there was a risk that the children could end up wandering onto the sidewalk and even further onto



FILE PHOTO

the road. She was responding to a motorist's concern that this was unsafe and she seemed to agree with them.

If Sudbury's police believe that sidewalks are not safe for children, even while under the supervision of a guardian, I strongly urge them to become part of the community effort to have a funded active transportation co-ordinator.

The active transportation co-ordinator will help make our city safer for children because their job will be to make walking and cycling safe for everyone, and that starts with our most vulnerable, like children and seniors.

Gabriel Keresztesi
Sudbury

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