

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Two unrelated, but timely news items

By Stephen Somerville

I was planning on writing about housing issues in York Region and in Aurora, but I will save that for another day.

Two other recent items from the national media caught my attention.

The first was a news report out of Fort Myers, Florida.

A man was recently arrested for the 1990 double murder of a woman and her roommate.

The man remained free until this past August when the accused was sent to jail on a felony aggravated battery charge for shooting his son with a pellet gun. A subsequent DNA test matched him to evidence found at the scene of the murders 26 years ago. (A 2009 law requires DNA testing for those arrested for felonies)

According to the same news report, "This guy has been off the radar for 26 years" the accused has been in the community the entire time, 20 years at his North Fort Myers address, seeing the yearly updates.

Steve Russell, the 20th Judicial Circuit State Attorney, said the arrest of this man and subsequent prosecution should "give hope to victims' families and fear to those who commit crimes that cases can be solved at any time."

There are probably thousands of cold case murders or rapes in North America that have gone unsolved for a long time.

New and improved DNA techniques may help to solve them.

My suggestion is why don't we - collectively the U.S. and Canada governments, that is "go a step further. Currently, every baby that is born is weighed and their vital information is gathered for their birth certificate.

Why not now include a strand of hair or a blood sample when the tyke is being weighed?

And why not require everyone else, when they are applying for their Social Insurance Number or driver license to include these samples.

I know that civil liberties advocates will scream murder and use the slippery slope argument.

I don't buy this argument.

We all lose a small part of our freedom when we individually decide to live in a society or be part of a community with others. We can't do whatever we want to our neighbors or infringe on their enjoyment of their property.

There is already so much information out there about each of us. Just witness our credit and banking information, for instance.

It is a slight trade off of an individual's information against a societies' right to safety and not have murders or rapists on our streets.

If we adopted this procedure a large number of uncaught dangerous criminals would not be sleeping very well this evening.

The second news item that caught my attention was a story about a mother who aggressively shaved her daughter's head after catching bullying a cancer patient.

The mother did this after learning that her daughter had been bullying a girl at her school who was bald because she has cancer.

According to the news reports there have been more 13 million views of the video of the mom shaving her child's hair.

What the young girl did was repulsive. However, I don't think this is an appropriate way to teach a child about bullying.

I agree with one person who posted the following online:

"Kids make mistakes you don't need to freaking shave their head, you should just talk to them. Shaving her head and recording it and showing it to people is really humiliating and she could be hurt physically and mentally. This is going to scar the girl for life."

An opposite view from another person:

"I'm not sure I'd put it on video BUT her hair will grow back and until it does she will know how this other poor girl feels. There's nothing like being sick from cancer and hav[ing] the thought [that] she could die and being bullied on top of that. This mom believes in treating everyone with respect. Her daughter just got a taste of the reality of being a bully it must stop. May God help us all to be kind to others."

Other than the last sentence, I don't agree with the arguments put forward by this person.

The mother could have either grounded her daughter for a long time or taken away a privilege from her or better yet, done both of these plus have her daughter volunteer at a cancer hospital.

Reader comments on either of these two items are welcome.

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com