

You can't fix stupid

by BRIAN LOCKHART

First there was crane girl ? now there's chair girl.

Yes, another weird story out of Toronto that the media has focused on.

A young woman was video taped while standing on the balcony of a Toronto condo, somewhere around 40 floors up over the streets of the city.

For some reason she picked up a patio chair and tossed it off of the balcony while a camera followed it down to the street. It landed harmlessly near the entrance of the building.

Yes, it was a stupid thing to do. Someone could have easily been seriously injured or killed by that falling chair. Apparently there were other items tossed as well in an effort to prove that gravity does indeed exist.

People in the good city were outraged by this incident ? especially the people who live in that building and aren't too happy that many units are being rented out in B & B type arrangements meaning that quite often they have no idea who is actually living there on day to day basis.

What boggles the mind is that the video was posted on-line for everyone to see.

It didn't take long for people to notify the police of who the girl was. She realized the jig was up and turned herself in.

She is facing several charges, the most serious of which is 'mischief endangering life,' which actually has a maximum penalty of life in prison.

The young woman made a court appearance and didn't exactly help her case as she smiled for reporters and seemed to relish the attention. Any judge seeing that might take the notion that her apology to the court really isn't that sincere.

Her lawyer, made the comment that there was 'peer pressure' involved. Seriously? Peer pressure for a 19 year old to do something that stupid?

While no one is expecting her to get the maximum sentence if convicted, many people have said they think she deserves some jail time. I don't know if putting someone behind bars for a first time non-violent but stupid offence is prudent, but she certainly needs to learn a lesson about putting others in danger.

During a discussion on the matter on talk radio in Toronto, the house lawyer who is actually a very good regular guest, made the comment that the judge just might give her a stiff penalty to 'send a message' that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated.

Well, news flash, the message has already been sent ? in fact it was sent several thousand years ago when just about every society on the planet made it clear that certain behaviours, like murder, stealing, and causing trouble just wouldn't be tolerated.

Many years ago I had a job in St. Catharines working on the Welland Canal. It was a tough, but interesting job which allowed me to get on most of the Canadian Laker ship fleet.

We had a new guy who joined the crew and one day during shop conversation he said something that made me take notice. I asked him to clarify.

He said, 'The battery on my car died so I have to go out tonight and steal a new one.'

'Why don't you just go to Canadian Tire and buy one like everyone else?' I asked him.

His reply was 'Why should I pay for a battery when I can steal one?'

It's pretty hard to argue with that kind of logic from that kind of person because in his mindset, stealing is the correct thing to do when the situation called for it.

Despite thousands of years of 'sending a message' and 'setting precedents' for punishment, there is always someone who will ignore the fact that certain things are simply wrong.

Most people, at least I assume, are taught by their parents at an early age that stealing is wrong. In fact I don't think most people even have to be taught that taking something that isn't yours isn't the right thing to do.

I don't know what ever happened to the battery stealer, but I would guess in the years following he has been in and out of jail for various stupid offences. He's just one of those kind of guys.

No matter what message is sent to the public, what precedent is set to determine a punishment for people who break the law with intent, there's always someone who will come along and toss something off a balcony just to see what will happen.

You just can't fix stupid.