

Capital Punishment

The question of capital punishment is one of the more confusing issues facing our society today. Moral discernment is quite difficult and a rational approach is even more puzzling. However, I do not think that . . . "public executions, perhaps firing squads, to those persons convicted of murder in the United States" is the answer, as quoted from an editorial entitled "Violence," in the January issue of Smoke Signals. We are concerned, though, with the deterrent effect of capital punishment. The question is, does the death penalty act as an effective deterrent (or discouragement) to murderers?

Through extensive study Psychologists have determined that there are basically three types of murderers. The first type is the murderer who suffers from physical, mental and cultural deficiencies. This includes disorders of the mind and body and environmental circumstances that deprive a child of developing moral character. Their sense of resistance to taking a human life, which exist in the normal individual, is more or less absent in their case. In the second type, the murderer is a normal individual, but is subjected to intensely difficult or inciting emotional situations which leads him to commit murder, whereas, under normal circumstances he would lead a law-abiding life. This describes the man who comes home to find his wife committing adultery, and in turn, kills the man she's with, or perhaps the businessman who is forced into bankruptcy by an organized criminal force and under the strain attempts to eliminate the source. This type murder is executed extemporaneously or on the spur of the moment with little or not premeditation.

The third type deals with professional gunman. Who, in the matter of taking a life bears a close resemblance, in their mental habits, to members of the standing army. Little if any emotions are involved in the gunman's task, it is a duty that he must perform to receive his commission. The job of murdering is taken as a matter of course.

Thus, it is apparent that those who commit murder as a result of psychopathic compulsions or in fits of rage are relatively immune to the deterrent effect of the death penalty. No form of deterrence short of overt physical restraint, could serve to overt such murders. The professional gunman is not affected by the thought of the death penalty either. He realizes that his chances of being apprehended for his crime are relatively light, usually because of his superiors' influence and protection. And that the probability of his conviction after arrest is not more than fifty per cent.

Also, that he runs a fair chance of being released on a technicality in appeal even if he is convicted. And finally, if he is sentenced to death, he is likely to have his sentence commuted to life imprisonment and may ultimately be pardoned and restored to a life of freedom.

In summary, it would seem that three fourths or more of our society's murderers are immune to the discouraging thought of the death penalty. Considering this, we should feel confident in last year's U. S. Supreme Court ruling which struck down the death penalty.

—Bob Allen

Literary Musings



By PROF. ROBERT G. MULDER

THE AUTO RALLY CONDUCTED AT CHOWAN COLLEGE

When I was a graduate student at the University of Richmond, one of my favorite professors commuted to the campus by bus every morning. In the afternoon he could be found, rain or shine, at the bus stop waiting to be transported to his home on Grace Street.

"Why doesn't he drive his own car?" I asked an undergraduate.

"He doesn't own one," the local student replied. "He said when cars first came to Richmond, he thought they were a passing fancy and never brought one."

Most people today disagree with the professor's analysis, and cars fill the streets, highways, and by-ways in an almost disturbing manner. Each year millions are spent on automobiles and thousands engage in automotive sports.

At Chowan College we have a Motor Sports Club, founded in 1970, geared to offer students an opportunity to enjoy their cars while, at the same time, giving a chance to learn and practice driving skills.

Until this time the activities of the club have been restricted to one event, Auto Road Rallies. Because of the lack of proper space and equipment, this club has been unable to stage auto-crosses or drag-races similar to some of the larger city clubs.

The space for this week's column has been given to a complete explanation of the road rally as we drive them at Chowan.

A road rally is NOT an automobile race. The designed purpose of rallying is a race only in the sense that the driver races the perfect timing allotted in time-speed-distance. At no time in one of our rallies do we post speed directions in excess of state or town laws. Rally officials are careful to set the given course by following every driving law which may be encountered in an event.

There is no place in a Chowan rally for speedsters, law-breakers, or show-offs. We very vehemently discourage such, and instructions are double-checked to keep speed allotments and instructions within the reach of a safe driving experience.

Cars leave the official starting point at one minute intervals. Each driver has a navigator for reading the instructions and assisting in the location of land marks and road numbers. Before departing each driver and navigator must sign the following self-explanatory statement: "I hereby relieve Chowan College and the Chowan Motor Sports Club of any liability involving auto events sponsored in which I participate. This includes any damage to my car or any personal injury in the event of a mishap."

HOW IS PERFECT TIMING SET FOR A GIVEN RALLY? The officials who set up a road rally first select the course, drive over it, and record the

directions by landmarks and road and highway numbers. In cases of dirt track or roads with sharp curves, a speed less than the law allows is usually followed. Once the route is set up, the officials run the course four times keeping an accurate timing for each run. Perfect timing for a given rally is the average time taken when the four runs have been made. Sample runs are usually made at the same time on the same day a rally is scheduled to allow for average traffic and sun conditions which are encountered in the initial event.

Our rallies at Chowan normally have two closed Check Points with marshal who give penalty points to each driver depending upon off-time. For instance, Driver A leaves the official starting point at 3:30 o'clock; he is due at Check Point One at 3:58. If he arrives at 3:59-30, this means that he is one minute 30 seconds late and he receives eighteen penalty points. (The Penalty Point Chart used here was designed by Steve Gibbs, the first president and founder of the Chowan Motor Sports Club.) Perfect

timing at check points is also averaged by four runs taken by officials.

WHO WINS THE CHOWAN RALLY?

The car returning to official finish line clocking the time nearest to the perfect time wins the rally. In almost every rally the winner is within 30-45 seconds of the perfect timing. The object of each driver is to make the perfect time as set by the officials.

An accurate master sheet is kept on each entry. Penalty points are totaled at the finish line, however, they are used only to break a tie. In our last rally, for instance, two cars tied for third place; however, one driver had collected fewer penalty points than the other, thus declaring himself winner of that position.

Each car uses the same rally route given at the starting point. The perfect timing for check point stations and the finish line is derived in the explained manner. There is, therefore, a perfect time for each car depending, of course, upon his time of departure. Cars are lined up on a first come basis. Cars arriving at the starting line late may be to a slight disadvantage if darkness falls before the route is completed.

Adventure, competition, and an enjoyable driving experience are benefits to be derived from a Chowan Motor Sports Club rally. Winners of an event may realize financial rewards for the normal two dollars per car entrance fee is usually divided into three awards of twenty, fifteen, and ten dollars. Money in excess of award expenses is placed in the club's treasury.

Our next rally will be held at 3:30 this afternoon, weather permitting. Perhaps you'd like to join us. We meet under the Meherrin River Bridge, just slightly north of historic Murfreesboro.

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