

VIEWPOINT

Let's keep it moving on life's highways

DRIVING from the North Shore Sunday afternoon, did you miss a flight or ferry sailing?

Or arrive late for a music concert, play or film? Or miss an appointment, abandon a hospital visit, cancel a family gathering, lose business while a delivery truck idled in long lineups?

Or did you merely arrive tight as a violin string and mightily inconvenienced — forced to crawl over the Ironworkers Bridge because Lions Gate Bridge was closed?

Were you furious? I was. And my wife and I were only puddling along to a Vancouver Opera tour of the renovated Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Nothing that a little baroque cursing and a substituted afternoon nap couldn't alleviate.

You guessed it: Lions Gate was closed for three damaging hours because of what is euphemistically called "a police incident."

The "incident" was what police informally call "a



This Just In

TREVOR LATICENS

“Yes, an egocentric exhibitionist threatening to off himself/herself by stepping into the air from the bridge.”

And police procedure — this incident was slickhanded by the Vancouver police — is to halt all bridge traffic and try to talk the would-be suicide out of it.

I hate to repeat myself, but this advice has to be refreshed: Either let the jumper jump, or park a police car or two in the appropriate lane, bring out the rigs with the big flashing yellow arrows, and keep the

other two lanes open.

Put the highest priority on keeping life moving. The jumpers can work out their own fate, or have it worked out for them by a couple of persuasive cops and maybe a psychologist.

Doubtless there is a poignant story behind every troubled jumper. Know what? We are all troubled.

The successful are troubled. The celebs are troubled. The belly-scratchers out for a good time on Saturday night are troubled. All God's or Darwin's children are troubled.

The issue is whether the self-centred jumpers' troubles should spill over to tens of thousands of other people.

And self-centred they are. They could make more private arrangements for their demise. But they choose to draw inconvenient attention to their troubles.

A suicide is of course a terrible thing. The suicide of the young is especially terrible. But closing a bridge won't stop it.

I expect few to agree, but it's bitterly ironic that such effort is invested in trying to save the life of a (usually phony) jumper while Canada zealously protects the right to destroy more than 90,000 sensate and innocent fetuses a year, harshly stigmatizing those who strive to protect them.

As for the person threatening to jump from the Lions Gate last Sunday: He/she didn't. . . .