

SPECTRUM

The Black Triangle

The Supreme Court, gays and the Gleaner

FUNNY! A lot of people think the Forces are going to be flooded with drooling glass eyed fags and dykes.

Tristis Bhaird

I picked up a copy of the Halifax Gazette (the newsletter for G.A.L.A. of Halifax) the other day. On the front cover was a picture of a smiling man - an elated man - talking into a phone. The speech balloon above his head said "Hello? Recruiting Office?" It was worthy of a chuckle in my eyes.

It's funny because it's not going to happen, but lots of really freaked out people think the Forces are going to be flooded with drooling, glass eyed fags and dykes just panting to be bunked in close quarters with hot bodies in green.

The Supreme Court's decision is not going to attract homosexuals into the services. Those who join are going to join for the same reason they joined before (they like the fashion statement and there's no decent Army/Navy store in their town?) It's not going to necessarily lessen the difficulties of those who are already in. Official stands do not mean that daily procedures will change. Unspoken and petty acts are going to continue, and may even intensify for a while. What the decision will do is give Lesbians and Gays who are already in the services something to fight discrimination with.

While the news about the military was hitting the papers, another major victory for Gays and Lesbians was quietly passing through the system. On October 30 the deadline for appeal passed that the Federal government could have used to

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fight the Ontario Supreme Court's decision that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms be read as if to include sexual orientation under "sex" as a prohibited basis of discrimination. Basically this was a backdoor means of achieving the same rights that gay activists have been trying to get past the Tories. Once again these are big words that have no effect on everyday life (unless you happen to be a civil servant or work in a federally regulated industry - and have the cash handy to take them on)

Speaking of civil servants and such. I wonder if the recent Gleaner scandal making is going to result in a Mount Cashel-like affair. From what I hear the local paper probably shouldn't have went off with its hate half cocked. The authorities are having a hard time trying to figure out what to do with anonymous accusers naming politicians and the like (both living and dead). My opinion, if you want it, is that all accusations of victimization should be taken seriously regardless of who has died in the time it took to feel safe enough to come forward, but that a press trial against the living or dead whose sole purpose is to scandalize and sell copy is not the way to do it. Three things will now occur: 1) A man who

cannot possible answer (either by denial or compensation) to a very serious charge, and who has been linked to the even more serious crime of what was happening at the detention centre, is going to be spotlighted and smeared with the only outcome being a few headlines. 2) A young man with possibly a lot of carbuncle to clear out is not going to be taken seriously if he does try to pursue his complaint. 3) Gays get linked once again to multiple paedophilia (it is happening along heterosexual lines, but that isn't

titillating enough to expose in mainstream press) and everyone's worst fears about those sexual deviants are re-affirmed.

What won't happen is any permanent change in the justice system, the school system, the medical system, the social work system, or any other area where the abuse and exploitation of children and the powerless is a regular and generation spanning occurrence. Face it folks: we are a repeatedly sick society. Until we take a hard look at what

wounds we are inflicting, instead of drooling and snickering over the hype the media is feeding us about others (those people over there who are not like us at all!) it's going to keep on going into the next century, and the next generation of gate-keepers and mind shapers. PS There are an amazing number of events being put on by GALA (I know I'm amazed) find out where and when they are by calling the Gayline. And if you are lesbian and want more lesbian events then join and start some, darn it.

Metanoia

Now go and change your ways

UNIQUE! He was not an easy target.

by John Valk

Some time ago a writer, exiled on a Mediterranean Island, wrote a story. It formed part of his larger writing about a man he had come to know earlier. That man had intrigued him, and had elicited a life change in him. His way with words, his actions, his vision — his whole being — made him unique. That uniqueness is recorded also in this simple story, which goes something like this.

In the early morning, when the promise of the new day met with a cool breeze and pleasant air, a man came to the square, the centre of town life, and sat down on a bench. Unassuming and soft-spoken, he had an amicable air about him, and soon engaged passersby in conversation. Others gathered around, first a few, then more. As he spoke more powerfully, they listened more intently.

The quiet gathering was suddenly interrupted. A number of prominent figures abruptly entered the square. Well-known but not well-liked, and with an air of indignant self-righteousness, they disturbed the peaceful, amicable setting. Their brisk manner and determined look revealed their clear intent.

They dragged before the small gathering a rather timid looking individual. The facial expression and painful body language revealed a considerable powerlessness, vulnerability and fear. Looking straight at the soft-spoken man engaged in enthusiastic conversation, the intruders stated rather bluntly: "this person is known to be engaging in acts of gross immorality. To preserve the moral standards and values of this community such persons must be sought out and their immoral behavior publicly exposed. What do you say?"

The tone of their words made it clear they were not seeking judicial advice on a weighty legal matter. Nor were they indecisive regarding a moral decision. They knew the man himself had high moral standards and a great concern for private

and public conduct. They also knew he had great influence, even persuasive powers with the people. He attracted a large following, something that eroded their own positions of public trust and influence. They cleverly set the trap.

The man's response, however, frustrated them. He was not an easy target. Quietly and with his head down, he took a stick and rearranged some stones on the path. But the men continued to press him, demanding a reaction. Finally he stood straight, faced them and said, "Let him who is without fault make the first grand announcement." Then he bent down again and continued his silence.

A hush fell over the now gathering crowd. The facial expressions of the accusers suddenly changed, from anticipated triumph to unex-

"Neither do I condemn you. Now go and change your ways."

pected defeat. Slowly they turned and began to walk away. Soon the square emptied.

When the man looked up, the accused person stood alone before him. The man spoke and said, "Where are they? Has no one condemned you?" The accused replied, "No, no one." Then the man said something to the individual that left a lasting impression. It elicited a change, a *metanoia*. He said, "Neither do I condemn you. Now go and change your ways."

Community policing Noise by-law

City By-Law S-9 prohibits any noise within the city which may cause a "public disturbance or otherwise disturb inhabitants of the City." There are several exemptions to this by-law including construction equipment and vehicles between the hours of 6 A.M. and 9 P.M., Monday through Saturday. Another notable exception is snow removal equipment. A noise likely to cause a public disturbance is loosely defined in the legislation as "any noise or sounds of such volume or of such nature as to cause annoyance to residents of the City..." At first glance this may seem somewhat vague, but any restriction to the generality of this type of legislation often leads to an ineffective law. The Police and the Courts must apply the test of reasonableness to the individual circumstance in order to determine if the by-law has been violated.

This technical analysis is easily avoided because in the vast majority of cases the person(s) producing the noise are unaware that anyone is being disturbed, and once this is brought to their attention, compliance is voluntary. This is the point that we want to emphasize: with a little forethought we can all be better neighbors. Whether it's loud music from a party at 2 A.M. or a lawn mower at 7 A.M., the important thing is that we respect those around us by realizing that our actions have far reaching effects. A child that doesn't get the proper amount of sleep doesn't learn well in school the following day. Similarly, the shift worker or late studier needs to sleep as well; and some of us just like to sleep in on the weekend. As we get to know our neighbors and get a feeling for our community we are better prepared to respect the different lifestyles of our neighbors.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact our office at 451-5908.

BRUNS NOTICE

The Brunswickan is interested in adding a native column to the Spectrum pages. Presently, we are in the process of trying to find a native student(s) who would be interesting in writing such a column. The Brunswickan would appreciate any suggestions for this column and if you or somebody you know may be interested in writing this column, please give us a call at 453-4983 and ask for the editor-in-chief.

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