

# EDITOR

## But I Digress... Kelly Lamrock



Well, I finally did it. Those words are the first I have written as a member of the information generation. Today's column is brought to you by my brand new home computer.

Sign me up Frank. I want my \$250 rebate. Bill Gates, ask me where I want to go today. I have been lured to the limitless promise of new worlds, the potential of the global village. I want information at my fingertips, Paris at my keyboard, technology at my command. Let me explore...

Actually, we played football first. My friends all gathered to watch the computer be unpacked, installed, and empowered. Probably stunned by the vast array of technology before us, we chose to share the awesome spectacle of watching \$3000 worth of equipment run a \$55 video game.

It may well be a dangerous admission letting the Department of Finance know that their dear tax rebate has subsidized a computer football tournament. That is, of course, assuming they read *The Brunswickan* in between games of Windows solitaire. But I digress.

The fact is, I'm still somewhat surprised I plunged ahead and got that computer loan. The fact of the matter is, most of my friends think I was born to Amish parents and merely adopted by my Mom and Dad. Pathetically, my technophobia has even robbed me of that visceral protest that separates our generation from our parents before us - our innate ability to hook up a VCR. My girlfriend, Karen, still regales friends and family alike with the tale of our first date, when we went back to my apartment to watch movies and she heard me utter those magical words every couple dreams of. "Um, do you know how the hell this thing works?"

The trust in our relationship is sustained by the fact that she knows I am genetically incapable of a suave seduction of any other woman. I think I amuse her.

Hey, if the world was filled with people like me, no one would have ever built a nuclear bomb. Or a slingshot, for that matter - I failed shop too. But I digress.

So, guilty as charged. I have been dragged kicking and screaming into the post-industrial world. Although I have finally been converted to the pleasures of researching and writing essays at home, I am still a conscientious objector to the rush to computers. Here we are in New Brunswick, the McKenna Miracle swirling about us, and I am forced to confess my secret to you, here and now: my name is Kelly, and I don't really like computers.

First, for all the lofty hype about the world at our fingertips, computers are chiefly used for the following scholarly purposes:

1. Getting Dave Letterman's Top Ten list from last night before the dweeb in your Chem tutorial repeats it all to you with the punchlines screwed up.

2. Sending the top ten list to your friend who got into Dal medical school, probably while you were busy reading top ten lists.

3. Playing hearts while you wait for someone to design software that writes a ten page essay on the poetry of Alden Nowlan while you play hearts.

4. E-Mailing your prof to tell her you were too sick to write the essay.

Second, computers provide me with a way to file all my important documents in one place where I can lose them all with one boneheaded keystroke, instead of having to absentmindedly misplace them one by one.

What it really comes down to, however, is that I do not wish to live my life by virtual reality. I worry when I see people performing tasks on the computer which are actually quicker without it. The on-line magazines and newspaper take longer to search and scroll through that it would to simply pick the damn thing up and read it. Not every note needs to be produced by a word processor. And for heaven's sakes, just go to the library and spare yourself the agony of, "Your search has turned up 2,407,652 matches!"

And please, spare me virtual reality. It's called an imagination, and it allows you to think happy thoughts without standing in the middle of a shopping mall with a Sega machine over your head. Now I hear that virtual sex is around the corner. Do you remember those guys in grade 8 who joined the Dungeons and Dragons club and never talked to girls? *We'll never see them again!*

It's nice to write this column here in my living room with Monday Night Football in the background. But please, pick up the phone and call me if you want to discuss it. Do not e-mail, e-fax, or voice mail me. Do not check out my new web site. I want to linger over newspapers and lug around the works of Shakespeare, not surf the net. I do not want my world to shrink into a series of images, where people are reduced to words on a screen, where I identify myself by pointing and clicking, and where nothing, not the news, not the theatre, not the football game, are any more real to me than any dozen of my monitor such as Sonic the Hedgehog. And hey, if you caught Letterman last night, come tell me what the top ten list was and we'll laugh together.

Hey, Bill Gates, you know where I want to go today? Out for a walk, that's where.

Of course, after that I'll be ready for a little John Madden football. Hey, it's the 90's.

## Womynsay

## Debunking Common Feminist Myths

### 1. FEMINISTS ARE MAN-HATING LESBIANS

First of all, not all women are feminists, not all feminists are lesbians and not all lesbians are man-haters. Furthermore, all these relationships are bilateral, random and unpredictable. The relationship of women, feminist, lesbian and man-hater have less correlation than is commonly assumed. There is no pattern.

One of the basic tenets of feminism (no matter what strain) is that man, not man and woman, has been taken as the measure of all things. This is a most significant misconception and it is revealing in that it once again presumes that women (and male feminists) may be defined in relation to men. This shows society's preoccupation with the negative. Feminism is not about hating men, it is about loving women and respecting the feminine principle in life. It comes about on all levels of human existence including the spiritual. To pronounce feminism man-hating is to invert the positive in favour of the negative and divert energies to something that is not an element of feminism.

### 2. WOMEN'S STUDIES EXCLUDES MEN

Women's Studies analyzes and deconstructs women's oppression at the hands of the patriarchal powers-that-be. Since we all have been a part of this, it examines other women, internalized distaste for feminine elements and, yes, men. Men are not barred from taking Women's Studies courses, yet men do not sign up in significant numbers. WS is not just for women and all benefit from it. It is likely that men may feel alienated in the WS classroom because it is a woman centered instead of male centered model of pedagogy. The oppression of one gender is inevitably synonymous with the oppression of the other due to our interconnectedness: we are all born of

### 3. FEMINISTS WANT TO BE MEN

This requires a definition of "man." Is there something inherently masculine about wearing pants, working in public and being political? And what's the threat anyway? You've got to ask yourself, why is gender so rigorously enforced? What does it represent? Some feminists may erroneously be seen as wanting to be men because they want to take a role that deviates from the strictures of traditional femininity.

### 4. MEN ARE OPPRESSED BY FEMINISTS

See 1, 2 and 3.

### 5. PORNOGRAPHY IS A MATTER OF CHOICE

Get thee to a basic economics course. Or better still, use your head. Sweeping generalizations are always dangerous, but the natural law of survival says no \$, no eat, no cat - no live. Why is porn primarily exposure of women? Why are women's top paying jobs still modelling and prostitution? Being just a body is not all glamour and glitz. Do you laugh when you hear the riddle "What is a woman? A life support system for a cunt?" Sexuality is the most powerful means of control.

### 6. FEMINISTS ARE HAIRY FREAK-WOMEN

Sell your tv. Stop investing in pop culture. Think, see and feel for yourself. If you still think the media is unbiased, look for one example or even a token example of a "friendly" feminist. Who runs the media machine? Who benefits from the oppression of women? According to dominant media and classical Hollywood convention feminists are either hurt, damaged or lonely women or butches living out their penis envy. Many of the feminists I know wear makeup, shave and sleep with men (and even like it).

### 7. FEMINISTS DESTROY "THE FAMILY"

Why yes - my feminism does destroy the family, a very definite type of family, the patriarchal nuclear one. Harmless, sentimentalized and nostalgic (the home from which less and less of us are emerging) it presented mom and dad as a female primary caretaker on the one hand and a male higher paid dominant force on the other. This is one of the most basic and insidious forms of misogyny. Chances are, unless you lived on a commune, you experienced a power play out of which the feminine force was ultimately subordinated mentally, physically, psychologically to the masculine. Considering that we become our parents this is a chilling truism.

### 8. FEMINISM IS A SINGULAR TERM

Not so. There are many feminisms and many people who embody many of the principles but reject the term. Feminists come in all colours, codes, creeds, beliefs and yes, as a function of this there are bound to be disagreements within the feminist community.

### 9. THERE'S NO NEED FOR FEMINISM. WOMEN ARE EQUAL NOW.

I have one word: naive. I, personally, do not measure women's emancipation primarily by inclusion/exclusion in the affairs of the world. Numbers make the inequities manifest. If you want to talk economics for example, women in NB make 64¢ to every dollar men make. Women's Studies departments must still defend their existence. Sexuality is still a cause for shame instead of pleasure. Backlash comes from those you most trust and love.

*Carla Eky-Lam is a member of the UNB Womyn's Collective. All womyn who would like to be involved in the collective or the December 6 Montreal massacre commemoration please attend the next meeting on Mon. Nov. 11 at 5:30 in T 222.*

## Family-arity

According to a number of researchers, there has been a steady increase in the number of same-sex families in the world. Adoption, artificial insemination and custodial parenting have opened up avenues of familial promotion for lesbians who want to have children.

Meanwhile, the mere subject of "gay families" rings a controversial toll within our societies. Various same-sex families proceed through a wide range of family exposure; from secretly disguising the parents' relationship to being open about their lesbian status. The key issue at hand is the reaction that such same-sex parents receive when their "sexuality" is exposed. The resulting social reaction can be heart-warming or dire for same-sex families.

Currently, Canadian society is relatively ambivalent about same-sex families. In the United States, President Clinton's recent banning of same-sex marriages cast a pall over the rights of lesbians in the number

of psychological problems. Although another study does indicate that children of same-sex parents are more prone to prejudicial treatment and discrimination than "traditional" parents, this is clearly a case of society's problem with lesbians and not a problem with same-sex families.

Despite the relative openness of the 90's, same-sex families remain under a threatening cloud whenever the subject of the parents' sexual orientation is revealed. The legal, moral and religious contentions to lesbians underscores same-sex family life. The threat that one's relationship and child can be torn apart by society's negative perceptions is a damning consequence of the intolerance of some people. Yet there is some light at the end of the tunnel. The progress of lesbians in society, albeit slow and small, is significant in comparison with the past treatment of lesbians. What we can look forward to in the future remains to be seen.



## God and the company car

"If nature had a CEO, this would be the company car." This bold assertion is accompanied by a photo picturing a Toyota Land Cruiser perched on a mountain top. According to the latest statistics, 71% of Canadians and 76% of Americans believe in God. But do they believe that God is a CEO? This is the self-inflated language of business, not Scripture. And, who would link the Scriptural God to a Toyota, regardless of its engineering quality, let alone any car?

"God is still not dead" stated an article in *The Globe and Mail* (Nov. 2/96, D5), in spite of the efforts of the liberal elites. But what concept of "God" as a religious statement, still exists in

the hearts and minds of North Americans? I wondered whether advertisers are subtly foisting something upon us again, this time something religious.

To sell more of their products in an increasingly competitive market, advertisers stretch to new heights of creativity. Brewing Companies advertise "lifestyles," more so than beer, to increase sales. The effective impact has not been lost on the automotive industry. Has Toyota had gone one step further, to increase marketshare? Is it selling a certain religious "lifestyle," by making certain religious pronouncements?

The ad continues: "There is perhaps

no more powerful force than nature itself." According to whom? Not according to Christians, Jews and Muslims. There is a more powerful force than nature. It is God the Creator, whose imprint and spirit are daily and visibly recognized in nature, yet separate from it. Christians, for one, insist that a clear distinction be made between God and nature. They are not one and the same.

The ad continues yet further: "The Land Cruiser is perhaps the only vehicle designed to elevate you into the position of managing that power." Really! Is Toyota suggesting we can indeed be in the driver's seat of nature? Will a Land Cruiser do what only God really can? Humans have attempted to supplant God since time immemorial. Is Toyota merely the latest attempt? "You too can become like God", whispered the "snake" to Eve in the Garden.

The ad recognizes that we "can never really own nature." This is true, and so recognized by Christianity, Judaism, Native Spirituality, etc. The earth is not ours to own. Property is never ultimately private. It belongs ultimately to the Creator, who gives it to all humans, for their care and sustenance. God gives us of the earth to share with one another.

The concluding sentence carries a clear modern day religio-economic assumption: "while you can never really own nature, you can have a controlling interest." This is the language of "Big Business," of Bay and Wall Streets. To have a controlling interest is to have power to control, and today that generally translates into a control to maximize profits at all costs. Today nature is frequently used solely for this purpose, a means to a monetary end.

That outlook is diametrically opposed to the teachings of Christianity, Judaism and Native Spirituality. We are not to control nature, but to live in harmony with it. Nature is not for the purpose of translating wants into needs for profit-taking. We are to be stewards of nature, which has been entrusted to us, including our children's children, to use and enjoy.

Does Toyota offer us a false (religious) hope? "Toyota Land Cruiser; I love what you do for me." is a sugary parting line, but is it fraught with deception? Will a Toyota Land Cruiser truly give us a "mountain top experience?" Or, like an idol, will it blind and deceive us?

Idols are like that. They suck us in, and remake us in their own image. Cars are no longer means of transportation. Advertisers promise that they will make us "gods" - King of the road, CEO's of nature, liberated to "new freedoms."

Following the dictates of idols comes with a price tag. And we have paid dearly, in the form of devastating pollution, highway carnage, asphalt cities, depleted resources, and personal debt.

It is unfortunate that the teaching about religion is so curtailed in our educational system. No doubt university educated people created these ads, perhaps even educated liberal elites who still insist that "God is Dead," or at least wasting away. Do these same people also still insist that religion should remain in the churches, synagogues and mosques?

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