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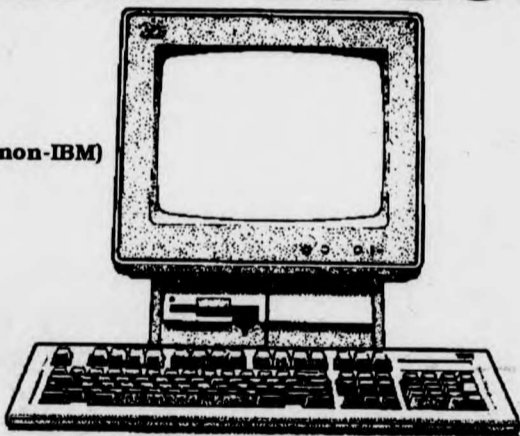
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COLUMN

Pro-choice not pro-abortion

Women's autonomy

by Sue Pennypacker

A while ago, I wrote about bill C-43, the proposed abortion law. Fortunately, that column had to be cancelled because the bill was defeated in the Senate. The lack of a law, however, does not mean that the battle is over. The pro-choice movement still has a lot of work to do.

Before I go any further, I should clarify my understanding of the pro-choice movement. My definition is by no means exhaustive, but it may help to clear up some misconceptions. To be pro-choice is not to be pro-abortion. A woman may, in fact, be opposed to abortion for herself, but can still support the right of other women to make this choice.

In general, the issue is that of women's autonomy. Within the context of the pro-choice movement, this means that women must be able to control their bodies: including sexual orientation, sexual activity, and the right to have or not to have children.

Since the demise of bill C-43, federal Justice Minister Kim Campbell has indicated that she doesn't plan to put forward any new legislation to criminalize abortion.

This is good news in the sense that there will be no legal ramifications for receiving or providing an abortion. On the other hand, however, access to safe abortion is not ensured.

The federal government seems to have abdicated its responsibility and pushed a contentious problem into the hands of the provinces and the medical community. The pro-choice movement has to work on many fronts to ensure equitable access to abortion.

Justice Bertha Wilson, in *Regina vs. Morgentaler* states that the criminalization of abortion, "is a direct interference with [a woman's] physical person . . . Wilson also says that "[a woman] is the passive [recipient] of a decision made by others as to whether her body is to be used to nurture a new life."

The dissent of (wo)man

While one would think that this type of exploitation would end with the demise of the original law on abortion (sec. 251 of the Criminal Code) and bill C-43, this has not been the case. The fact that the majority of hospitals across Canada still refuse to perform abortions shows that autonomy is still not in the hands of women.

The decision to have an abortion is not that of the hospital, the doctor, or the nurses; it belongs to the woman.

By limiting the ability to obtain abortions, the medical community usurps the autonomy of women. Therapeutic abortions must be treated like any other routine procedure. The morals and values of the doctor cannot be imposed on a decision which is so individual and private in its essence. We need a non-judgemental (at least outwardly) medical community which does not evaluate decisions in any way except medically.

I hope that the pro-choice movement is able to continue its discourse with society. Canadians cannot be allowed to rest on their ignorance about the reality of access to abortion. The notion that abortions are easily obtained and that the medical community is unbiased needs to be challenged. Apathy on the part of our community and our government cannot be tolerated.

The battle for the autonomy of women is frustrating, heartbreaking, and never-ending. Every time, we think the job is done, a new facet of the problem emerges. I hope that we will all have the strength to see this through.

Yesterday's news

by Colette Boileau

Much has been said about recycling these days. Some wonder why the university has just begun recycling and in fact a lot more needs to be done in this area. What I'm most concerned with are the logistics of it. The university would recycle more if there was money to be had in it, after all it beats paying to have it taken away (which will happen sooner than they think).

But who in their right minds would pay for this so called garbage — well a newsprint company, or perhaps a company that makes paper napkins, toilet paper and tissues from recovered fibres (recovered via the recycling process). Seems logical doesn't it? Now here's where the problem begins — in order that this fictitious company can pay money for our wastes it too must have a market for its product. This is where you and I come in.

Buying recycled paper may be the start, assuming that it is in fact 50 per cent or more post-consumer recycled content, which basically means half of its content came from the Administrative Building's paper bins (or possibly elsewhere).

But what else can you do? And I know you all want to do this as you're concerned about your campus (let's stick to the local scene for now). How about

THE GREEN SCENE

buying other recycled paper products or by reading the cereal box labels to find out more than just the ingredients. Check and see if your brand uses recycled fibre boxes. If not, consider switching brands.

Did you know that there's a kitty litter out there made from reused newspapers? It's called Yesterday's News (kinda like this article for some of you). Well okay, so all of you don't have a cat but there are other products out there. I challenge you to find some.

The key is that by completing the cycle (remember the recycling logo) you can create a viable market and help divert some of York's massive amounts of waste.

And the next time you find yourself dropping something into the by-now familiar Blue Box I recommend that you harken back to our chat when you find yourself in the bookstore selecting a pad of note paper and be wise — choose for recycling on campus.