

Letiters

Real Indians

Dear Editor:

Ah, so now Mr. Schleich reveals the regrettable fact that he has already despaired of Indian culture. He implies in his letter (October 19) that since Indian culture "will never tolerate any 'living'" we should neglect what's left.

That bibliographies and "research" are divorced from "living" cultures is obvious, Mr. Schleich. Yet regarding Indian

culture you say, "We killed it, are killing it, will continue to kill it" as if there were no hope of salvaging what is left. At least an attempt to salvage is better than bawling in despair. True, the steamrolling process HAS gone on--but now is the time to attempt to stop it.

Be realistic, David. If Harvey McCue and other Indians adhered to the psychology that you advise of simply "living" rather than attempting to also collect certain aspects of that culture for posterity, the ways of the Indian would very quickly be "steamrolled into oblivion."

Ideally, of course, Indians SHOULD be encouraged to "live" their culture. But as it stands now, most are caught between the two irreconcilable worlds of total assimilation into or total rejection of white man's culture. Unable to solve their dilemma, most Indians rot on reserves without the machinery to change their lot. Obviously this abject life is not the type of "living" that Mr. Schleich would want for the Indian - is it?

Perhaps a certain amount of assimilation is essential for the Indian at this point. Assimilation does not mean total lack of memory of cultural ways: often assimilated Indians are in the best position to help those on reservations ACCULTURATE--that is, to accept only those aspects of white man's culture needed to lift them above abject poverty and restore self-pride. The "assimilated" Indian is in a position to understand both the Indian's dilemma (he sees his relatives on the reservation) and the white man's world which surrounds him-- and he can help to bridge the gap between them.

Even if Indians today return totally to living the old life-- the life of teepees and campfires and dances and low survival rates-- as Mr. Schleich hints that they ought to do, they cannot be assured that future generations of Indians, tempted by the dazzling technology and comforts of the 20th century, would be content to "live" it too. And even if they did, would the Indian be able to exist as any more than a curiosity piece? Will the white man understand him enough to leave him alone? I doubt it.

You say, Mr. Schleich, that you "don't deny the right of native Canadians to have their cultural heritage preserved in books". It will also be preserved, of course, in tapes, films, cultural displays in museums etc, etc. Granted, all these artificial preservatives are "dead" exhibits of an almost extinct culture.

Yet disseminating information about the Indian and the values of his culture is one important way in which pressure can be brought to bear on the white governments in whose power the destiny of Indian culture must lie. We cannot say, simply, "Leave it up to the Indian to 'live' out his dilemma". The enemy that has to be fought is not only Indian apathy engendered by his degradation at the hands of the white man, but also the apathy of white man's governments.

And this latter battle, unfortunately, has to be fought with white man's weapons--with bibliographies and films and tapes and concrete research. That, Mr. Schleich, is why your indictment of Indian research institutes such as at Trent University does more harm for the cause of the Indian culture than good.
Heather Botting
Art 111

RIP-OFF!

Dear Sir:

Why did a great evening have to end in a rip-off? I'm referring to Octoberfest. It turned out to be a lot of fun but I guess there's always some slob to wreck it. My three complaints are:

1. The mug stealing--upon entering you were given 1 mug and 1 only. So when you drunks thought it would be nice to have *at least* a set of 4--what did you expect the rest of us-- who were dancing at the time of the theft to drink out of--our hands? Once ours were gone we had to get another one too, in turn the person's we swiped had to steal the other guys. So a lot of people ended up without one. Enjoy your future drinks out of *our* mugs.

2. The beer ran out at 8:00. This I know is no fault of the students. But if enough of us complain about it, maybe next time the ALCB will give us more.

3. The pigs who go to such events and steal each others clothing. If you're that poor why don't you get a loan or go on welfare? What did you expect the person whose coat you stole, to wear home in 20 degree weather? But to the person who took *by mistake*?? The brand new, (worn for the first time) down-filled \$45 navy ski jacket from the 2nd table on the west end of the gym near the band-- it was very nice of you to leave your dirty torn blue ski jacket. You got a real bargain didn't you? So if you've got any kind of a conscience or if you really did take it by mistake how about returning it to 711 Kelsey and we'll gladly exchange with no hard feelings. If you did steal it and run I hope you realize it will take 3-4 days of work at a reasonable pay to earn the money to buy another one. That's 4 days work for nothing--except for you to have a new coat. Would you work for someone else's jacket? I hope you feel you did yourself proud.

So the total cost of the evening was \$6 for 2 tickets plus \$45 for a new coat which equals \$51. Pretty expensive for an evening wouldn't you say, considering that you don't have anything--not a mug nor even your own ski jacket--to show for it. So--why the hell don't people like you stay at home next time and let the rest of us have fun?

Judy Cholowski
Sc. 2

Vive le Biltek

Dear Doug Black,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chairman of Building Policy Board. I am regarding a change in Building Policy.

Some time ago I wrote to you requesting that graffiti in certain selected washrooms in the Students' Union Building should not be removed. On May 11, you informed me that this proposal was unacceptable because: "this is a public building and therefore this factor forces us to face a responsibility for certain standards to the public."

-it is objectionable from a moral or quasi-moral and sanitary point of view"

-also I do not accept the quotation that ended your letter: "fools names and monkey faces always appear in public places,"

In fact, I do not accept the statements for I believe they do not apply to graffiti.

Graffiti is in fact an art and should be treated as such. To quote from one of our washroom artists":

"Graffiti is a valid people's art form and as such should merely be edited not eradicated."

and public standards to the people's art in the washrooms possibly these standards should apply to art in the Art Gallery.

In terms of aesthetics I would suggest that the words on the walls are much more pleasing than the ugly marks made as a result of the caretaking staff's scrubbing. I would suggest, as others have done, that the caretaking staff refrain from scraping from the walls our precious graffiti. As one toilet Tennyson put it:

"I wish these janitors would leave these walls alone. (It's true folk art.)"

Doug, I propose that the Building Policy Board adopt a policy which would have the graffiti remain on the walls, and that the walls be cleaned at Christmas and in August so as to allow for a fresh new crop of graffiti to spring forth from the fertile young minds of the University of Alberta students.

I should be pleased to attend a meeting of your Board to discuss this proposal further.

Vive le grafitti,
Dave Biltek,
Vice-President, Academic

Council goofed

Dear Sir:

The university is traditionally a place of inquiry--inquiry into all areas of government. Now, when a government suspends civil liberties, sends thousands of troops into the street, arrests hundreds of persons without charge and so on, this is a matter that students and academics should inquire into, particularly when the government refuses to allow a public inquiry on the matter. I feel Student Council has seriously violated its responsibilities on this matter, and the reason is partly due to the fact that they choose to ignore the widespread support the commission has had from people of many different political parties who feel it a necessity to the democratic process that a government's actions be questioned.

Obviously from the opinions expressed by council members, the student council has prejudged the findings of the hearing, ignoring the fact that the commission is an open public forum for all opinions. The Edmonton Support Committee has every intention of strongly appealing the appalling actions of Council on this matter.

The Edmonton Steering Committee for the Citizen's Commission of Inquiry into the War Measures Act.

Yes you are...

Dear Bob,

Do you really feel the Students' Union Executive is incompetent, or do you just not get facts straight when they are told to you?

On Monday night we sat down and discussed the National Conference to be held in Ottawa prior to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada Conference- November 1 - 4. This conference as reported in the Gateway, will bring student leaders together to discuss topics of mutual concern. Yet in the last paragraph of Tuesday's story, you say "the Carleton University student government is organizing the conference". To set your facts straight, the University of Alberta student executive, and more specifically, Don McKenzie and myself, are planning the conference. Richard Labonte, Carleton Students' Union President, is helping us in Ottawa.

Another misleading statement is your story title "Student Conference will discuss unemployment". What will be discussed is a look at future employment for graduate students. Saskatoon recently hosted a conference to deal with the broad scope of unemployment and was therefore felt unnecessary to discuss it again.

And one last thing, Bob, for God's sake try to spell my name correctly once this year.

Sincerely,
Ian McDonell
Vice-President, External

...No I'm not

Dear Ian,

I am sincerely sorry you were offended because I did not pamper your ego to a greater extent than it deserved in my story on the national conference. I did, however, mention in the lead paragraph that the U of A Student's Union was the host of the conference. However it is also true that the conference will be held in Ottawa and that the Carleton Student Government is doing much of the work for it.

I am also sincerely sorry that you seem to believe it is possible to write a headline which contains the entire story.

I qualified the headline in the body of the story by saying "Student unemployment will be a major topic of discussion...."

I know you told me that the conference would discuss employment opportunities for graduates. But given the present state of the Canadian economy--what you and McKenzie told me, and what is listed in the conference agenda (which, incidentally, does not mention employment for grads, but rather dwells on summer employment), it is extremely safe to assume that the conference delegates will be talking a great deal about the lack of employment for both the summer and for grads.

In future, I will consistently attempt to spell your name the way you do, not for God's sake, but for the sake of your piece of mind, and hopefully, to avoid any more nit-picking letters.

Sincerely,
Bob Beal

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