

One button not enough

Let's Stop Racism.

So reads a button adorned on many a jacket this past Monday. You see... Monday, March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Quite a mouthful of a phrase—not like popular St. Patrick's Day or romantic Valentine's Day.

What do you wish people on this day? You can only say "Happy International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination" a few times before your tongue gets tied or the wrong words come out.

And why just one day?

Has our society digressed so much so that we need this one internationally-declared day to remind ourselves not to discriminate against a fellow person? I shudder to think that. I really do.

And then there are those who think that problems of discrimination don't exist, and if they do, they exist in other communities, in other people — and of course, not in me!

I admit, at one time, I believed that I was a racism-free person. I kept an open mind and judged individuals based on character, and not on race. I had developed a kind of 'racism-free mental process' through which my own personal thoughts were screened and filtered, before being expressed. I think the majority of self-declared 'racism-free' people do this. And in this blissful, naive state of mind, many of us do not recognize our own subtle discriminatory actions.

But then I realized, in my own subconscious efforts to be non-racist, what in fact I was doing was simply covering up what could be considered racist thoughts. As difficult as it was, I had to admit that I was not truly racism-free.

And with this self-realization, began a new personal journey into cultural diversity and identity. It is a learning process through which one must immerse oneself completely mentally naked. With an open mind and searching for experience, I've only begun to explore the true meaning of cultural diversity and my own identity.

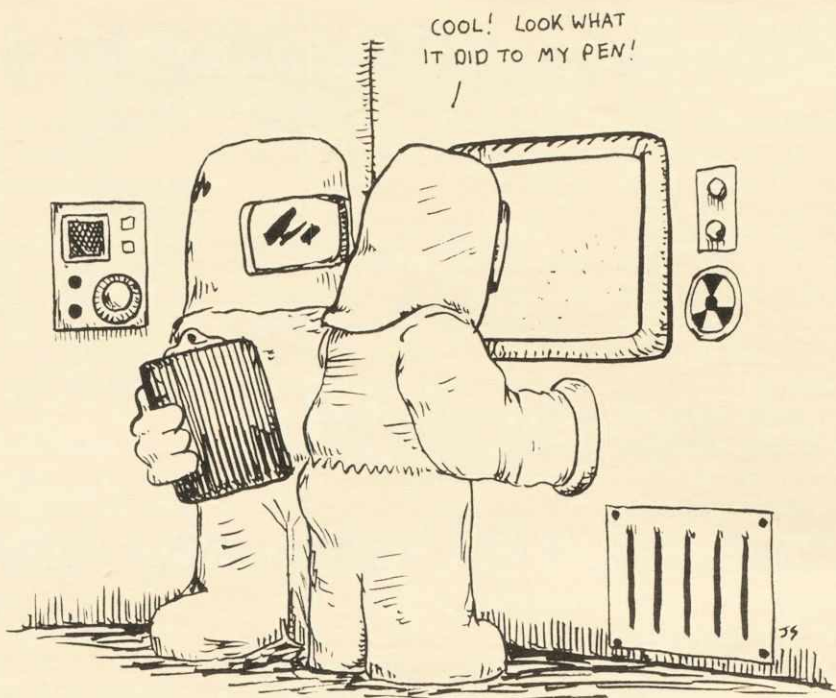
Being Korean-Canadian, some people think that I'm 'halfway there' in understanding cultural diversity. But that's not true. Having been brought up in Canada all my life, how do I know what it's like to be a Korean living in South Korea? How do I know what it feels like to be Black? To have a disability? To speak English as a second language? To be lesbian? To be aboriginal? Or to be anything else that I am not right now.

The phrase 'put yourself in someone else's shoes' has no real meaning for me. As hard as I can try, I will never fully understand what it's like to be someone else, to think the same thoughts, to have the same memories and experiences, and to believe in the same things.

That is why events such as Cultural Diversity Festival are important. It is a time to appreciate and celebrate our differences. To learn from each other. To admit how little we know. And to learn about ourselves.

But in the end, one day, one button, one festival is not enough to eliminate discrimination. These are all just token items. But combined with an earnest desire to learn and share what we've experienced with others, our communities, our societies, and yes, even you, can begin the long process of realizing the true meaning of cultural diversity and come closer to the elimination of all discrimination.

Lilli Ju



ANOTHER RESEARCH-INTENSIVE DAY AT THE SLOWPOKE.



LETTERS

The Dalhousie *Gazette* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 500 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Monday 4 pm before publication. Letters may be e-mailed or submitted on MacIntosh or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

Royal rumble

To the editor:

The editorial "Monarchy is dead" (March 17) by the *Gazette's* copy editor Richard Lim marks not the end of the monarchy but rather a profound misunderstanding of matters constitutional and political. Sadly, it is this sort of uninformed and unimaginative opinion which is running rampant throughout much of the Commonwealth today. The vast body of legislation, treatise, literature and art work which supports the complex concept of constitutional monarchy is impossible to elucidate in a brief letter, but a few of Mr. Lim's points may be rebutted.

Mr. Lim rejects the Queen's position as the head of a democratic Canada, writing "Why is our government comprised of democratically elected Canadians? She can run the show alone!" The reason to this question lies in the constitutional arrangements which began with Magna Carta in 1216 and have run through the civil disturbances of the seventeenth century, the reform bills of the nineteenth century, the BNA Act in 1867 and the patriation in 1982. This evolutionary development has provided us with the distinct form of constitutional monarchy in a parliamentary democracy wherein governing sovereignty is vested in the Commons. A head of state aloof from the political mire by virtue of inheritance prevents the foibles of partisan politics from tainting the idea of the nation.

Mr. Lim dubiously associates the Queen with Quebec separatism. Separatism is a product of English Canada's failure to recognise Quebec's cultural distinctiveness and has little to do with constitutional monarchy. It would be impossible to recruit francophones for the Royal 22e Régiment (the loyal Vandoos) if there wasn't a certain respect existing in Quebec. Indeed, the separatist leaders of the Parti Québécois have repeatedly expressed their admiration for British institutions. This is not surprising when it is remembered

that the conquest on the Plains of Abraham freed New France from the absolutist Bourbons and the ensuing terrors of the French Revolution.

Mr. Lim's statement that "no political lobby group can tell me that my ruler and keeper is a non-multiracial/cultural non-bilingual non-Canadian living in a palace across the ocean" represents the height of ignorance. Does Mr. Lim regard the Canadian Parliament, which repeatedly enacts legislation in the name of the Queen of Canada, as a "political lobby group"? Furthermore, although it is impossible for any head of state to ethnically embody the diverse particularity of a nation, it is judicious to note that the Queen is fluently bilingual and has an ancestry which is quite "multicultural".

Republicans of Mr. Lim's ilk wish to destroy the rich tapestry of this land in the pursuit of a politically correct state. The creeping nihilism of modernity may well facilitate the success of these tiresome levellers.

E. Penz
Arts undergraduate

Royal rumble II

To the editor:

The views expressed by Mr. Richard Lim in last week's editorial "Monarchy is dead" are shared by many women and girls involved in the Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada (GGC).

The proposed changes to the GGC Promise and Laws are indeed causing a great deal of discussion. Through my experience growing up through the Guiding movement, participating as a leader and as this year's Vice-Chair of the Young Women's Caucus of GGC National Council, I know that the renewal of our Promise and Laws is important.

The Young Women's Caucus is comprised of members between 17 and 30 years of age from across Canada. We discussed the new Promise and Laws drafts and voted in favour of the changes at the National Council. They now express the true spirit of all members of GGC, young and old, today and

tomorrow.

If Mr. Butters of the Monarchist League of Canada believes "the Queen in Canada", then to promise to do one's best to Canada should be sufficient in the GGC Promise.

Not only has the reference to the "Queen" been removed but also the religious reference to "God" has been changed to "my God/my faith" to better reflect all members' individual beliefs and spirituality. These changes allow a combination of the traditional and new.

Many members of GGC helped to make these changes through various levels of Guiding, committees, and participation in surveys. I am sure these changes will be passed at the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and be quickly adopted into the growing Canadian Guiding program.

Tiffany Jay
Vice-Chair, Young Women's Caucus
Girl Guides of Canada

Rah rah rant

To the editor:

I would like to comment on Joe O'Connor's article ("Young Tigers learn a hard lesson") in the last issue regarding the results of the AUAA basketball championships. In his article he stated that he would like to blame Dal's loss on Dalhousie's "spirit squad" but didn't want to face the school's "Senate bloodhounds" in the process.

First, who are the Senate hounds anyway? And second, the cheerleading club is there to lend its support to the athletes while hopefully at the same time adding to the spectators' involvement in the games. However, we are not on the court to score baskets nor are we responsible for the final score.

A comment like that tends to take away from the hard work our team has put in for the school. Many of us have frequently taken time off from work on

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