

MUGWUMP JOURNAL



by Mark Savoie

The Brunswickan has a problem. We've got too many nice people on staff, and that really hurts here, in *The Brunswickan's* official bitching column. Last issue's Mugwump was written by Tim "The Wimp" Lynch, a nice person. And all the gutless wonders who won't even sign their real names to this column are nice people... I don't have that problem.

Lots of crap in Ontario these days with the old language issue. Sue Saint Mary (Sault Ste. Marie) is now declaring itself a unilingual community. Doaktown tried to do the same here in New Brunswick, but their mayor seems to have backed down from this fine attempt to promote racism in Canada.

The Rotten to the COR Party was probably glowing about all of this, but they took a real belly punch when Fort Smith, NWT declared itself to be quadrilingual. They're going to be French, English, Cree, and something else (another Indian language, possibly Chippawayan). It's good to see a community standing up and pointing out just how stupid this whole damn thing is.

As far as the COR Party is concerned I keep wondering when they're going to come up with their new party platform: for all people of French descent to wear a fleur-de-lis armband. All I ask is that they build the smokestacks high, I don't think I'd be able to stand the awful stench.

How about those SUB Staff, eh? The building's supposed to close at 1:00 am on weeknights. So there I am studying in the cafeteria when SUB staff comes by and kicks me out 'cause they're closing up. NO problem? Except that it's still only 11:55 pm. The person who is locking up early is the same Nobel Prize candidate that forced me to walk home in a T-shirt after the last Ujamaa concert up in the Social Club. Seems he couldn't take the trouble to unlock one door in order to let me into *The Brunswickan* offices so I could get my coat.

Wayne Carson and Gary Clarke are back from Texas, where they sacrificed their studies for the good of ~~their~~ UNB students. They even brought back some Texas beer, those loyal fellows. I have heard reports that one of the executive voted for the excursion because Wayne hasn't been on a trip yet this year. So when the hell did the Student Council decide that we had a duty to support Air Canada?

Last Sunday I was at the Fredericton Alpines game against the Miramichi Packers. Despite living in this hole; this foul festering pit of Hell; for the past fifteen years, I started cheering for the Packers late in the third period because the Alpines were a bunch of moronic goons. Chippy hockey is one thing, but these clowns were simply out and out dirty.

Tim Lynch and yours truly are currently basking in Toronto as we cover the UNB Red Bloomers on their quest for the CIAU crown. We are truly making the supreme sacrifice in presenting you all with the best of UNB Athletics. All games will be broadcast on CHSR-FM, broadcast times to be announced.

The Red Bloomers put on one hell of a show against Acadia and Dalhousie last weekend. Their heart, guts, and determination were truly a treat to watch. You can read about it in this week's paper, as *The Brunswickan* presents another excellently written story on the Red Bloomers.

The Sports Section this year has been fortunate to have a singularly well written column. I am, of course, referring to the much heralded and ballyhooed 'View From The Cheap Seats'. This column has become the definitive statement on sports of our time.

OPINION...

On absolute truth

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out. . .

John 18:37,38

I was pleased to see James Gill addressing head on the issue of religion and homosexuality in his "In the Pink" column (Feb. 23 issue p.21). I was disappointed that his stated reason for doing so was in response to the D

Keener letter (Feb. 16 issue p. 35), which presented quite insensitively written personal accusations, instead of in response to the well-written article by John Valk on p. 7 of the same issue, who was offering a clear and balanced Christian perspective on homosexuality. If I were to answer in like fashion, I suppose I would address myself to Adrian Park's vindictive piece of fiction (Feb. 23 issue p. 7), but it is Gill's column that merits a response.

In his column, Gill laid out several claims: 1) the Bible does not take a clear position on homosexuality, in that what it says on the matter can be validly interpreted in several different and mutually exclusive ways, 2) rightness or wrongness (of homosexuality, of murder, etc.) is only a matter of opinion, and 3) such opinions may be ascribed the status of truth (e.g. ". . . I am free to find my own truth."). I will not deal here with claim 1); the disagreement that I (and most of Christendom) have with it is explained in John Valk's article (or better yet, see for yourself by reading the Scriptures).

In claims 2) and 3), the clear implication is that there is no absolute truth associated with the rightness or wrongness of acts such as, the use Gill's own examples, homosexuality or murder. That is to say, while an individual may *believe* that the act is right or wrong, one cannot say that it is right or wrong in an *absolute* sense. Like one's favourite flavour of ice cream, it is strictly a matter of opinion, one's "own truth". Henceforth I shall refer to this view as "Gill's view".

How can anyone know that Gill's view is true? One can't. It is a *belief* that there is no absolute truth associated with rightness or wrongness, it is not fact and it is not proven. Why does anyone believe this view? Because, for whatever reasons, s/he is convinced that it is true. Convinced by various things, perhaps upbringing, schooling, trying to think it through themselves, or whatever. So, on whatever basis, s/he is convinced that it is true and therefore s/he accepts it and has faith in it. This faith is hopefully not blind faith, i.e. accepted without question (though I suspect this is often not the case), but faith it is. A faith which is widespread amongst academic communities, and indeed much of modern North American society. For those individuals who ascribe to it, it is an important part of their world view, determining much of what they think and say and do.

The Christian faith has the opposite belief (as do many other faiths), i.e. that there *is* an absolute truth associated with right and wrong. As a Christian, why do I believe this? Because I am convinced by many things that the Christian faith is true (although I was an atheist for many years). Being convinced, I have faith in it. It is an important part of my world view, determining much of what I think and say and do.

What is odd (and distasteful, and tragic) is that while I openly recognize *my* beliefs as being based of faith (as do most of my brothers and sisters in Christ), the many advocates of Gill's view do not seem to recognize that its underlying assumption (viz. of no absolute right or wrong) is likewise a matter of their own world view, their own faith. This has lead to numerous allegations by them, in this newspaper and elsewhere, that Christians are *not* "open-minded" like they themselves are. Well, these advocates themselves are not "open-minded", at least not in the incorrect sense that they are using the word: they judge, and harshly, by their own code. For instance, saying that such-and-such a behavior is wrong in an absolute sense, when they believe it is only a matter of opinion, will earn you many insults and unjust accusations, simply because your beliefs are different from theirs.

Therefore, let both sides be open-minded in a true sense: firstly, by each acknowledging to the other the beliefs and faiths from which we both view the issue; secondly, by trying to listen to and understand the other perspective (even though we may still disagree with it), and thirdly, by trying to explain ourselves to the others and be understood by them. That is what being in an academic community is all about.

Chris Bayly