

EDITORIAL

As an Anthropology student all I could think about, when I heard about the possible cuts to federal transfer payments, was a Colombian saying which I had recently noticed in a book I was reading.

The saying goes *El costo de la vida sube y sube y el valor de la vida baja y baja*. It means *The more the cost of living goes up the less life is worth*.

This became especially poignant to me as I realised with the release of the long awaited discussion paper which threatens to cut \$2-billion from federal transfer payments to post-secondary education, that the politicians in Ottawa have not heard that same saying.

This extra cost must not be transferred to the backs of students. We are already reeling from the cost of post secondary education. This year as I hopefully face graduation I was struck by the fact that I am leaving with a bachelor's degree in Anthropology, will probably be unable to find a job in the field which the university has educated me towards, and I owe \$20,000 (plus or minus a few bucks) to various Canadian lending institutions.

With the state of the economy I already don't know how I will be able to pay my loans back, and the Liberal government in Ottawa is proposing cutting transfer payments to universities by \$2-billion dollars. They are offering to let me take out more in loans to cover the increased costs.

Ge... Thank you very much for your concern you vampirous asses. If my appraisal of the situation is correct, a few years after graduation, as I go on UI for the third time and you make me toddle off to my "volunteer" job picking garbage at the side of the road... I'll remember you... and that saying...

When the economy doesn't ever really recover and 20 years from now I am trying to figure out how to afford to send my child to university and I have to send my child to the cheaper Provincial University (much like the American State Universities), The University of New Brunswick because Mount Allison University went private (and only rich people can afford to go there), and Saint Thomas no longer exists as it was forced to close for financial reasons... I'll remember you... and that saying...

If only you, the politicians, had read the same Colombian saying I did, and connected it to your political lives you might still be around. The saying went: *The more the cost of living goes up the less life is worth*. It's not just our private lives but your political lives as well that we are talking about. Because if this proposal goes through and student's cost of living goes up, the next time that there is an election we will remember you... Fuckers!



The other month or so, I discovered the sheer pleasure of getting *Mouth2Mouth*. It's a decent new magazine that offers an alternative to the pre-pubescent teeny-bopper trots spew mags like *Teen* and *YM* or my personal favourite, *Sassy*. Oh, I'm just so Sassy. Whatever. Anyway M2M has this great little column entitled 'Dead Guy of the Month'. Well to the editors of *Mouth2Mouth* here's my little tribute which I originally and inspiringly call Dead Guy of the Week.

Most students here at UNB don't know dead guy Bliss Carmen was famous and probably, if asked wouldn't give a damn. My first introduction to the deceased was one dreary, even crappy morning when I was not-so-merrily skipping on my way to class. On the side of an old white house I happened to notice his name emblazoned on a slightly tarnished plaque. It told me that Mr. Carmen, the present corpse, had lived there. I was going to inquire whether he still resided in the place but better judgement prevented me from making such a faux pas.

If you've ever had the chance to sit below the library on one of those little benches perhaps, to ridicule the GAGS (Geodesy and Geomatics Students) when they're taking measurements, then you might've seen Bliss' name and two other dead guys on the obelisk that sits between the benches. Don't worry he doesn't share the same grave or well... I don't think so. This permafrost kissing triad were at one time New Brunswick Poet Laureates. *I really hope that wasn't their day job because I don't think the pay was or is anything significant*. So I'm inclined to believe that he was famous for writing poetry or something and he didn't even have to drive any where in a white Ford Bronco. I have never read any of his work but I probably will at some point because I think he was just swell

Speaking of dead things. My favourite holiday is just around the corner. Yep! You guessed it Happy Dead Turkey Day. Oh yeah, I love to chow down on a good size meal so massive that it gives Richard Simmons and his Deal-a-Meal cards one huge coronary just thinking about the fat laden gravy and the monster calories cherry cheese cake I'll consume with a swipe of my hand and the opening of my mouth. Since I had no invitations to eat with any of my neighbours, I'll be faced with eating with my extended family. It usually is one Hell of a battle to get that last coveted drumstick. I'm ready to do battle and I'm armed with a Lobster Hut bib. So beware Chris, Marlene et al.

Blood n' Thunder

Dear Editor:

While it is assumed that the administrative function of this institution is conducted in good faith, unfortunately, it is not always the case that the policies flowing from it constitute reasonable grounds for the resulting prescriptions. Such is clearly the case with the current policy of conscripting students to purchase supplementary health care insurance. While there does exist a mechanism whereby students may appeal matters of an academic nature, no such formal means seems to exist with respect to non-academic matters; however, upon examination, it is clear that the above action is "not fair in all of the circumstances", and relief must thus be granted to individuals such as myself who have been injured by it overbreadth. Last spring, upon first being made aware of the intention to institute the current supplemental health care scheme, I was under the mistaken impression that the exigency of "opting out" would be made available to those who do not wish to participate in this program; although voluntary assent is the sine qua non of any contractual relationship, despite the element of nuisance, such a strategy is tolerable in the name of administrative efficiency provided that ex post facto repudiation is available.

As the situation now exists, individuals such as myself have, under duress, been forced to purchase the said insurance, irrespective of either one's wishes or the viability of such a disbursement in

promoting one's personal financial affairs. Not only is such an arrangement invalid, but by making such participation mandatory for attendance, without any compelling reason for doing so, this policy has the potential to constitute a breach of power to the extent of being extortive. While this surely cannot be its intention, nonetheless, such is the result in cases where consent would not normally obtain were one not subject to the compelling circumstance of being required to withdraw from university to escape its grasp.

Ironically, this coercion is apparently being applied in the name of service. Oddly enough, it does not seem to have occurred to its proponents that it is not necessarily the case that all student would benefit from such a scheme. In order that such a purchase be prudent, the investment must be analysed in terms of its cost versus the level of its probability of benefit, in the context of the circumstances and expectations of the particular individual. Personally speaking, the expectations of my being in a position to derive any benefit whatsoever from this policy is remote, thus it is extremely likely that I would be forced to incur a loss of the entire \$100 fee. In situations where the consequences of lack of coverage are prohibitive, it may indeed be prudent to seek such protection; however, the policy in question confers only nominal benefits, and thus is subject to analysis purely on a balance of probabilities. There are various propensities toward utilisation of the services provided for;

from none whatsoever (in my case) through various degrees up to the level of cost, of what participation would be unwarranted; and finally, to levels beyond cost, where participation would be cost effective. It is not unreasonable to assume that there are students other than myself, perhaps even a significant proportion, of whom it would not be reasonable to assume such participation would constitute a sound investment; and, in any case, such a decision must be left to the particular individual if his or her rights are not to be unduly infringed upon.

While such conscription would be untenable in any circumstances, it is of particular importance that students, the overwhelming majority of which are in possession of very limited financial resources, not be precluded from the judicious disbursement of which their circumstances require. While this oppression is not the intention of this policy, it is certainly contained within the scope of its effect, due to its being instituted in a manner "not fair in all the circumstances." It is the duty of the Administration to correct this injustice by allowing for voluntary withdrawal. To many, the purchasing of this coverage may indeed present a welcome opportunity; but to other, such as myself, incursion under duress is seldom perceived as an advantage.

Sincerely,
A.J. Carisse

Opinion

"A rose by any other name . . ."

Most are familiar with the line uttered by Juliet in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." However, if the rose were to be referred to as 'shit', would it then smell just as sweet? Would be offended if, instead of a bouquet of roses, someone offered us a 'pile of shit'?

Well, to answer the question, the rose would smell just as sweet. However, we would accept the shit with some hesitation. We would realise, upon seeing the rose, that the person offering the rose, either willingly or unwittingly referred to the rose as 'shit'.

It is a fact that humans infer a great deal from words and their connotations. For example, a word like 'terrorist' invokes images of wild eyed, bearded fanatics, killing innocent people or protesting something or other in some backward part of the world. Well, the same image is conjured with the words like 'Arab' or 'Muslim' or 'Jihad'.

Iraqis, Libyans, Syrians, Lebanese, Algerians, Iranis, Egyptians and Saudis are all part of a SEMITIC tribe known as Arabs. The majority of Arabs hold fast to the Islamic faith and are known as Muslims. Palestinians are the 'high-profile' Arabs fighting for their homeland and they are considered terrorists along with some others mentioned. And, I guess they are wild eyed when they are protesting and some have beards and some may even be fanatics and perhaps they may even live in a seemingly backward part of the world.

But, what if this is only an image being portrayed to us? What if they are really oppressed people, fighting only to regain their freedom for basic human rights? And what if they are systematically kept from becoming economically independent? And what if the young who are growing up amidst this struggle are perhaps growing more frustrated than their parents? And what if the only hope these people have is a strong sense of faith in their religion? What if all Arabs are not Muslims?

If these things were true, would it then be possible to see these people as 'humans' with human emotions and with

human frailties, could we then perhaps even sympathise with them and their plight.

The word 'jihad' also conjures up images of uncontrollable masses or irrational people. The premise of the Holy War is that since they would die for their faith, these people cannot be reasoned with. How can a crazed man be dealt with through 'logic' and 'rational' thought? Muslims are accused of adhering to this belief and, as such, are labelled as "fanatics" or "fundamentalists". And the stigma of a fatalistic religion is attached to Islam.

But, what if 'jihad' doesn't really mean "holy war"? What if it really means religions "struggle": a struggle to uphold ethics and morality in society; a struggle for fairness, equality and justice for all; just like the struggles we face here in this society? What if when Muslims struggle against an oppressor, they praise God for His help? What if was inherent within Muslims to be thankful to God for the good things in life and the bad things in life, because even a bad thing could have been worse were it not for the grace of God. What if some Muslims are only Muslims in name and not in deed?

It is conceivable that "squeaky wheel" Muslims who are getting the "grease" (i.e., as seen on TV) may not be true representatives of the religion. It is possible that Muslims are not as mysterious or as distant from the West as they are portrayed to be. It is possible that Muslims believe in an ideology not very different from that of the West. It is conceivable that Muslims may not be just another cult group. In fact, Muslims may possess a theology which is quite harmonious and beautiful in its doctrines. Yet, most people may never know this because of the image portrayed by some simple words.

That's when words like de-information, censorship and propaganda come to mind. Is it conceivable that a certain image is to be portrayed or perhaps we may not be ready for the truth? If so, who decides whether we are ready or not?

I recently saw a movie called "A Prayer for the Dying" in which Mickey Rourke plays a renegade Irish Republican Army ac-

hitman. It depicts the consequences he faces for abruptly leaving the fold of the IRA after bombing a busload of schoolchildren. You truly feel pity for the character, who happens to be an assassin. "All Quiet on the Western Front" depicting the German side of World War I, also invokes sympathy for the 'aggressor'. Most of these types of movies show the loss of innocence.

"Dances With Wolves" showed the inherent gentleness and honour of native North Americans. So did "Last of the Mohicans". This is in stark contrast to the depiction of Indians as savages and barbarians. Movies that try to enlighten beyond the normal perspective do exist.

However, Arnold Schwarzenegger's new film "True Lies" continues the normal trend of reinforcing stereotypes. The kids love this stuff. Mind you, I'm not knocking Arnold. I thought "Terminator 2" was very entertaining. But "True Lies" was just too easy.

I haven't been following the World Wrestling Federation too closely lately. But, I recall within all the melodramatic fun and excitement, there was a definite message being sent to the kids. Certain types of people are really bad and certain types of people are really good. And I recall that people representing Eastern characters were usually not nice guys. In the West, opinions are formed while sitting on couches watching television or having drinks with friends. Stereotypes are reinforced as views and opinions are reflected in jokes and witty quips. Information is often taken at face value and seldom questioned. So, the majority only knows what a controlling minority wants them to know.

Maybe someday 'objectivity' in the media arts will be more widespread. Maybe someday an Arab or a Palestinian will be looked at as a freedom-fighter. Maybe someday Muslims will be looked at as faithful followers. But no matter what you call it, a rose by any other name is still a rose.

Bobby Majid