

BLOOD & THUNDER

Letters to the Editor reflect the views of our readers and not necessarily those of the Brunswickan. Letters may be sent to Rm. 35, Student Union Building. Deadline: 5 p.m. Tuesdays. Maximum length: 300 words.

A Woman's Kingdom Revisited

"Am I understood?... Have I been Understood?... 'Not, at all, my dear sir!' Then let us start again, from the beginning." (Nietzsche)

Due to a misunderstanding of *A Woman's Kingdom*, the majority of its critiques are irrelevant. Issues were criticized that were not treated in the essay, although they may have been inferred from it, which is not necessarily negative. The libelous abuse directed at the author only makes a strong case for the powerful contempt that can arise through misunderstanding.

The essay was not personal, but philosophical: dreaming and dreading, the rebuttals were personal and case specific. Free exchange of ideas should be the life-blood and soul of a university's body. All ideas worth being heard. If people decide that these notions are bunk, so be it. To judge, however, one must first properly understand. Let us make the point of *A Woman's Kingdom*, its ideas absolutely clear.

The purpose of the example of FACTS was not to depict it as a tool of feminine vigilantes: "it's not that women are collectively plotting a bloody revolt against a male-oriented, -dominated and -educated society, or that certain leaders of women only groups are Adolf Hitler apprentices." (Blood & Thunder, *Brun* 14 Feb.) The point is this: the existence of an organization such as a "female anti-assault comprehensive training system" is a harbinger of the disturbing possibilities in store for all of us. Are self-defense and violence wholly different, or complementary parts of the same thing? The Oxford Dictionary offers: "Defense: the science of defending oneself (with weapons or the fists). Violence: the exercise of physical force as to inflict injury. Defend: to fight for the safety of." (Shorter Oxford Dictionary) Fists, force, fight?!? The distinction is more nebulous than most of us would care to admit.

Here is where the fear sets in, but it is not a private, personal fear as most respondents inferred, but a profound fear for community. More men exhibit a tolerant attitude towards doing physical injury than women. Women, who have previously shown an attitude of non-aggression, mediation, and peacefulness, are compromising those values and starting to accept men's aggressive vision. Soon, instead of one sex afflicted with an appetite for destruction, we will be cursed with two. "By applying the pressure of violence to women, we perpetrators are not only harming another person, but threatening all of us." (B&T *Brun* 14 Feb.)

The fear that should grip all citizens is that the mediators, who have kept our communities from

tearing themselves apart with hatred and aggression, may be leaving their post; forsaking all the balance that they have brought to a man's kingdom. In social living, women have played a more fundamental role than men. An old cliché says that behind every great man, there is a woman. With women to curb the aggressive tendencies that social man harbors, and complement his war with her peace, communities have survived. The unnerving change is that women are espousing men's aggressive attitudes. (Whether this is good or bad was not addressed in *A Woman's Kingdom*.)

Should women be prepared to fight with fists and force? Have we, as a society, left them any choice? Can we give them a choice? None of these were issues raised in the essay, but all respondents saw that it hinged crucially on them. These are all vital questions, but were not raised in the essay. *A Woman's Kingdom* was meant to offer a troubled vision; one of a world where our increasing tolerance for all manner of violence is shared by all. *A Woman's Kingdom* offered no answers, only questions; no judgment, but a thought. A thought on the direction of our efforts to end abuse of all kinds. A thought on the future, which is always upsetting and unclear, but never understood.

Jon Sears

A letter to Adrian Park

I am writing your column because I feel what recently happened to me is important enough to be shared by your readers - both gay and straight.

I was having many problems in my life - problems with school, problems with my room-mate, and most importantly, problems with my lover. Everything came to a head about two weeks ago and I had to do something about it. Well, I did.

I made what turned out to be the most important decision of my life - I came out of the closet! The best part about the whole experience was that the friends who I told were all supportive. Thanks to their understanding, opening up to them was a rewarding and great experience.

I am sure that most gay people who have taken this step can appreciate what a huge burden they unload. For me, my life changed overnight - I was a new person. I now have a much better relationship with my room-mate, I can now honestly talk to my friends (not just about "gay" things, but about life in general) and my lover seems to be discovering the "new" me (less uptight, more honest, etc.).

I just thought that any readers who are considering making this

step should hear my story. My life in 100% better now. Some people may be happy leading a "double-life", but I know I was not. Anyone out there who is as uncomfortable with it as I was, I just want you to know that you can take that step - it is not as difficult as it might seem. If your friends desert you at the news then ask yourself - "Were they really my friends?" I think the answer in that case would be obvious.

The best part of the whole experience was when a straight, male friend of mine was told. He said, "Don't worry, it doesn't change a thing." Then he shook my hand. The feeling I had when that happened is indescribable. Suffice it to say that it was a very good feeling.

So, to any of you straight people who have friends "come out" to you, do both yourself and them a favour - don't treat them any differently, they are the same person you have known and liked all along. It can give you a more honest friendship, a new outlook on life, and it can make the "coming out" task much easier on the gay person.

Thanks for listening.

Name withheld upon request.

We must be the change we seek

The February 14 Women's Room article sparked a reader to write a letter posing a crucial question. What are we willing to give up in defense of our earth - is a question all of us must ask.

Yes there are writers that waste paper telling us the same story. I didn't write the women's room article, but I was glad it brought up a point that until James Bay, and even now is hardly mentioned - there is oppression of the earth people. I agree we need to held (sic) people find their resolve because they must start with what they are willing to change, and be proud of it.

I'd like to tell everyone what I've given up, so that I may make this point - The self-sacrifice doesn't necessarily mean your quality of life will decline.

I have dedicated a lot of time to environmental protection, so what if I've missed some poor quality television viewing, there are other things I've gained. I no longer have a sense of guilt, and the feeling of impending doom is somewhat diminished. I've made a lot of friends, and important contacts.

I have changed some of my material needs, for instance - I've discovered that I can still be well dressed by buying my clothes second hand. You may ask how important is this to the environment, well if you take into account how much clothes a person needs and wants over the course of a lifetime

it is very important. Producing synthetic material is a major source of air pollution, and toxic waste. Natural fibers are produced with pesticides, and result in the loss of a great deal of topsoil. Is that all? No. The dyes used to colour our clothes are amongst the most lethal of substances. If each of us reduces our want for brand new clothing what a relief it would be for the environment, our wallets, and a boom for the second hand clothing industry.

There is one more crucial thing I have given up that has improved my lifestyle, please read the facts before you judge me to be radical. I've given up eating meat, it is better for me because 90% of the pesticides in the body come from eating meat. Sources say I'm saving 190 gallons of water per day, and 150 gallons of gasoline a year. I'm not advocating that everyone become a vegetarian, just reducing or restricting your intake of red meat would be an improvement. It is worth considering that a cow emits 2 litres of the greenhouse gas methane per day. Livestock produce 158 million tons of waste a year, some of which contaminates underground water tables with nitrates. Animal waste and feed fertilizers account for 40% of the nitrogen and 35% of the phosphorous released into waterways each year. Whole rainforests are being destroyed to feed relatively rich peoples appetite for meat. If only 10% of meat eaters became vegetarians, we could grow enough crops to feed the starving people. So there I'm not radical I'm just more ecological. Lets remember the point the women's room made - humanity was ecological and we changed, so we can't assume that we can't change again. Like Gandhi said "We must be the change we seek in the world."

Renee Carter SES

PS - my thanks to everyone who signed the protest board.

SMART PACC thanks

On behalf of the UNB SMART PACC program I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the students of UNB who came out and participated in our second annual alcohol awareness week. Through your participation, our events were a tremendous success.

I would also like to personally thank all the people and organizations who made these events possible. Specifically, I would like to thank: Rick Lambert from Air Atlantic and Green's Autobody Shop for their generous sponsorship of our smashed-up car contest, Coke, Headmasters/Headmistress, Coastal Graphics, Table for Two, The Body Shop, Sam the Record Man, NB Tel, The It Store, Jeans Express, and Luigis Pizza for the sponsorship of our mocktail contest, Greco Pizza for their sponsorship of our Residence Banner contest and The Social Club for the free pop they offered to designated drivers.

Additionally I would like to thank: Jeff Czorp for the excellent story he wrote on our week, the Daily Gleaner for their coverage, Drew, Sharon, and Chris and the Paper Post for their patience and help in all that they did for us, the UNB Student Union and the Marlene's for all their help, McLeod, Tibbits, Jones, Neville, Harrison, Bridges, Neil, McKenzie and LBR residence for participating in our presentations, Joe Doeg, Anne Ingraham, Mrs. Armstrong, Mary Brea, Mary Rutledge and Rick Cuthbertson, our mocktail judges, and most of all, ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE SMART PACC COMMITTEE for all their time, effort, and support during this week.

Once again thank-you all for your assistance.

Geoff Davidson



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