

The reality of multiculturalism

by Winston Pei

Mounties with turbans? I have no opinion because there is a more fundamental question that has to be addressed first. A common argument I've heard against turbans is that they are not traditional.

"They should not be tampering with our traditions because, after all, this is our country." I agree.

But what exactly is "Canadian"? Let's be specific. Who are "they" and who's "our" are we referring to? Who are "we"?

We eat steak if we're not at MacDonald's, ski and play hockey in winter, and say "eh?" between beers.

We were born here and our forefathers came here first. We built this country to where it is now, long before they came along.

We are either Catholic or Protestant, or at the very least Christian. Or at the very, very least, agnostic.

We are probably anglophone, possibly francophone (except of course in Western Canada), and if neither, we speak English. We might be bilingual, meaning we speak both English and French.

We are Anglo-Saxon, or at least caucasian, of course. Canada is a former British colony, settled mostly by Europeans, and we can be and often are mistaken for Americans at first glance. We watch HBO.

That is what our Canada is and should be, right?

I have skied twice in my life and I hate beer. I am a North American Baptist with an open mind. I was born in Edmonton to immigrant parents. I am fluent in Mandarin, English and French (I learned them in that order). I am quite proudly and thoroughly ethnic, Chinese to be precise.

What's more, I lied: I support turbaned Mounties. Said RCMP Sgt. Pierre Belanger in the Sunday, November 26 *Edmonton Journal*, page A3, "Every five to 10 years, we review our uniforms to see if changing conditions of police work warrant changes." For this year, female officers will go to wearing trousers, gun holsters and service shirts are being changed, and the brown Mountie service jackets are being eliminated. So much for tradition.

Am I Canadian?

My parents have always had a paranoia, or so I thought, about locking my birth certificate away in a safe deposit box. What could be sillier than needing a piece of plastic to prove I'm Canadian? I knew it in my heart.

I guess they were right after all.



LETTERS

Please keep letters brief. All letters must include name, faculty, year, phone number and ID number (ID and phone will not be printed).

Athletics irresponsible

An open letter to Dale Schulha, Chairman of the Department of Athletics:

Dear Mr. Schulha,

During the two and a half years I have been a student at the U of A, I have become a staunch supporter and defender of university sports as a quality product. As a result, it concerns me when I perceive an inadequate and misdirected effort by your department in promoting the various teams to the public.

Over the last few years, the bulk of your efforts have been given to gain the attention of sports fans in the general public. To a degree, you have been successful. The recent Golden Bear Invitational was a resounding success in promoting our basketball team to the Edmonton public. However, any momentum you may have gained was quickly lost with the onset of the CFL playoffs. The fact remains that, on the whole, Edmonton's major media outlets, and thus the Edmonton sporting fan, are pri-

marily concerned with the local professional teams. Only events like the GBI will replace the Oilers and Eskimos from the front pages of the sports section.

It is my belief that you and your department should be turning more of your attention to the people who the athletes are representing first and foremost; the students and staff of the University of Alberta. Right now, with the exception of a few posters pasted around campus, you have left the job of promoting the Bears and Pandas to the campus media. To be blunt, sir, I consider this to be an abdication of your responsibilities. The staff of *The Gateway* and *CJSR* are not public relations people. They are there to report about how the various teams are doing. Your job is to let the students get to know the players so that we can identify with them. A player profile in *The Gateway* can only go so far; why not bring the athletes directly to the students? Let them know about the deter-

mination of Gord Thibodeau to return to the Bears' hockey team after a bout of cancer by allowing them to talk directly to Gord Thibodeau. How about letting students ask Rick Stanley why his grades were so important that he would quit basketball for a year?

It would be so easy to have four or five of the athletes sit at a table in CAB once a week or so. Perhaps advanced tickets to their next home game could be sold, but primarily they would be there just to talk to people as they pass by. It would allow students to go to a game and cheer for players they have gotten to know a little better. Perhaps, also, the players can communicate some of the pride and dedication they have in putting on a Bear or Panda uniform. Less publicized sports such as swimming, gymnastics, or wrestling could get a better exposure. Most importantly, though, it would give both the athletes and university population the feeling that both sides care.

Nathan Grey
Engineering III

What would Letterman think about *The Bridge*?

Hot damn! I feel so frustrated since I read in the Nov. 25 edition of *The Edmonton Journal* about complaints concerning the "offensive" nature of the engineering students' society newspaper, *The Bridge*.

Was I angry about "gross sexual connotations" criticizing Mayor Jan Reimer's refusal to wear a beaver pelt? Well, no... not really.

Was I upset about the paper being "littered with sexist and repulsive jokes and pictures?" Ummm... no.

Was I positively pissed about *The Bridge* not being a "legitimate newspaper," but rather a "forum to discriminate against people?" Uh... no, not that either.

What really hits me like a great big boot to the head is the fact that I missed that issue of *The Bridge*! More than that — I've been hanging

around the University for several years now, and have yet to get my sweaty little hands on any issue of *The Bridge*, the paper whose characterization as a grossly offensive and generally irresponsible publication has earned it an almost legendary status.

Now, there could be a formal hearing with the University, concerning the possible breach of the Code of Student Behavior by *The Bridge*. That could mean the end of *The Bridge*, at least as we know it. That would be a shame — I'd prefer that the engineering students' society retain their freedom of expression, even if the paper was completely offensive to absolutely everyone. To quote David Letterman, concerning a possibly offensive piece of comedy, "This is what freedom is all about. This is it."

Ron Lalonde
Science IV



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