

Chuck's PTN

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Want to see something better than the run-of-the-mill programs that have been infesting our coveted airwaves (I am assuming you are nodding "yes")? Then give me all of your money so I can become an all-powerful television executive. If I was your representative executive for a television network—the People's Television Network, I would call it—these are the following shows I would propose to put on the air:

3rd Son From the Rock – Joey Lawrence and his two little brothers star in this sitcom about three wisecracking siblings stuck in Alcatraz.

Cosby Suddenly Susan – Bill Cosby in his funniest role ever as a sixty year old man who gets a sex change, much to the dismay of his wife and five children.

Rita and Friends – Rita MacNeil is added to the cast of Friends to boost their "sagging" ratings. In the season opener, Ross dumps Rachel for Rita. The Crash Test Dummies and Rusty co-star.

Dr. Quinn, Texas Ranger – After her practice goes belly up, Quinn (Jane Seymour) gets herself a gun and becomes the fastest gun in the west since Billy the Kid. Go girl!!!

The highlight of my broadcasting week will be the Friday night line-up, which will give new meaning to the term Thank God It's Friday:

8:30 – The Second Noah – Billy Graham stars as a crazy man who thinks God has told him to build a giant spaceship because He is going to blow up the world. Co-stars include Tammy Faye Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart as his equally insane friends.

9:00 – Everybody Loves Allah – Set in the 1960s, this comedy is about a henchman of Elijah Mohammed (Damon Wayans) and his weird ways of converting people to the Nation of Islam.

9:30 – Touched by an Archangel – People's lives are changed forever when Beelzebub (Christopher Walken) comes to small towns and brings out the evil in everyone.

And finally:

Dangerous Minds – The real life story of Mary Rogal-Black and the writers at The Brunswickian.

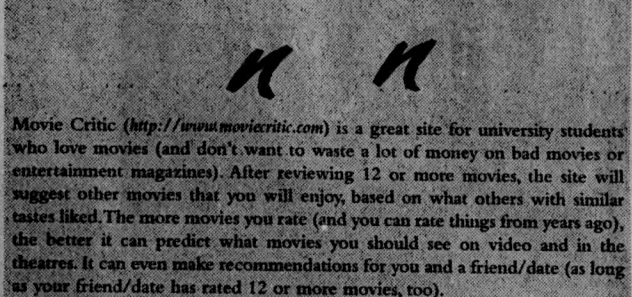


KENT RAINVILLE PHOTO AND STORY

"THE AWAKENING OF THE GREAT LION": The lion dance was part of the Malaysian Student Society's annual Malaysian Night festivities that occurred last Saturday.

This past Saturday the Malaysian Students Society hosted their annual Malaysian cultural night. The event was, as usual, well attended, with ticket sales of close to two hundred. As a regular at the various cultural nights here on campus, I wasn't surprised at the courtesy and kindness of the peoples represented. The evening started off with food, then more food—after which there was more food. All of it was excellent, and I ate way more than I believed humanly possible. After dinner came the entertainment, starting with a very colourful and acrobatic lion dance. This was followed by several other talented performances, including a kung fu (wushu) demonstration and a fashion show. Desserts were served throughout the evening, and by the time it was over I almost had to crawl back to my car.

Malaysian Cultural Night '96 was indeed fascinating. The event is open to anyone who wants to attend, so if you didn't get a chance to go, think about going next year—and don't forget to bring your appetite. Congratulations are in order to the Malaysian Student Society for another job well done.



Movie Critic (<http://www.moviecritic.com>) is a great site for university students who love movies (and don't want to waste a lot of money on bad movies or entertainment magazines). After reviewing 12 or more movies, the site will suggest other movies that you will enjoy, based on what others with similar tastes liked. The more movies you rate (and you can rate things from years ago), the better it can predict what movies you should see on video and in the theatres. It can even make recommendations for you and a friend/date (as long as your friend/date has rated 12 or more movies, too).

Movie Critic has links to official movie sites, so you can get more information about stars, directors, plots, others' opinions and more. And if you have any questions, it's administered by really friendly people who reply promptly to e-mail. It could actually be the next best thing to Brunswickian Entertainment.



Bizarre childhood memories, number three hundred and seventeen: I remember watching tv one Friday afternoon – I know it was a Friday as that was when *Crackerjack* was on ("It's Friday, it's five to five, and it's *Crackerjack!*"). At the end of every show, they did a silly play where they managed to work in a couple of hit songs of the time, and this particular week, Ed 'Stewpot' Stewart was doing something terrible to 'Making Plans For Nigel' by XTC. And I remember thinking that it was an unusual tune to pick as XTC were still kind of punky at that point, and not what you'd expect from the BBC. Bizarre.

Of course, that story will mean absolutely nothing to most readers (I do pride myself on keeping things willfully obscure...), but my point is that even back in 1979, XTC could write songs that were so very memorable without compromising themselves. In fact, most of their songs fall into that category, yet their

popularity only seems to last for one single at a time. Sigh. So it isn't a surprise that a compilation of their singles has finally seen the light of day. *Fossil Fuel* features all 31 gems of singles they released, from 1977's jumpy 'Science Friction' to 1992's mournful 'Wrapped In Grey'. Just a very casual listen will demonstrate that the band changed an awful lot over the years. And in retrospect, it also turns out that while XTC was always Andy Partridge's band (and, in my opinion, he wrote their best songs), it turns out that Colin Moulding also knew his way around a song, too. Who knew?

The first disc shows the progression from the early, punky days to the pop sensibilities of such hits as 'Senses Working Overtime', 'Generals And Majors' and, of course, 'Making Plans

For Nigel'. But it is on the second disc that the brilliance of XTC really shines through, as they finally manage to blend their many influences, ranging from The Beatles to less obvious psychedelic bands that nobody ever heard of, into a most satisfying blend. From the idiot's love song, 'The Mayor Of Simpleton' to the happily blasphemous 'Dear God', every single song is just wonderful. They may never have got above cult status, and their biggest money-maker to date was The Crash Test Dummies' completely unnecessary cover of 'The Ballad Of Peter Pumpkinhead', but *Fossil Fuel* will hopefully help to make up for lost time. It probably won't, but I've done my part.

PJ Harvey's last album showed that she fancied herself as a blues singer. Not only that, it also showed that she was good at it. Does this mean that blues are all we can expect from her now? Judging from *Dance Hall At Louse Point*, the answer could be yes or no. But, to confuse matters, this isn't even a new PJ album. Instead, it is a collaboration between musician John Parrish (part of PJ's band) and Polly Jean Harvey (yes, she uses her full name...) with the former providing the music, and the latter coming up with words and vocals. It isn't very easy listening though as the music is abrasive and dense, making it hard to come to terms with at times. And the vocals veer between close-to-normal and screeching like a banshee (just like old times...sigh). Sometimes the tracks don't even feel like songs as such, more like partial sketches that are still quite rough. The overall effect is very interesting though, and more

compelling than those initial listens will suggest. Next up is something that used to be a guilty pleasure – Heidi Berry:

dusk – it isn't all that important really). Anyway, her new album is one of those eponymously-titled affairs (i.e. *Sheryl Crow*), and it is unexpectedly good. For one thing, there is nothing as obvious as her last big hit – the first single, 'If It Makes You Happy', is as close as it gets. But the most important thing is that she doesn't try any tricks to get your attention. Instead, you get solid songwriting (with a bluesy feel in places), Sheryl's very powerful voice (her best asset) and a decent backing band featuring guest appearances by a couple of Elvis Costello's Attractions, and also Neil Finn (late of Crowded House). This won't be in my top ten albums for the year (probably not even my top thirty), but that doesn't mean that I can't appreciate it for what it is – a good album (although the standard disclaimers apply – only people who already like female singers need apply, no money will be refunded etc, etc.).

BOOKS

Banned for use in schools: Too gay, too sexy, too bad

ELISE CRAFT

While most people equate censorship with the entertainment industry and government, it is alarming to know that it is alive, well and thriving in Canadian and American schools. Apparently it's open season on literary works. Here's a sampling of books that have recently been banned or threatened with censorship.

Many of us here at UNB probably read either *Twelfth Night* or *The Merchant of Venice* in high school. *The Merchant of Venice* was banned in 1980 in Michigan for containing "crude words and phrases", and as recently as 1996 *Twelfth Night* was banned because it depicts "a number of romantic entanglements including a young woman disguised as a boy".

Another popular high school novel is *Lord of the Flies*. In this William Golding work, a group of boys is marooned on an island. The novel charts their decline into violence and chaos. Often graphic but entirely eloquent, this book was banned as "inflammatory".

Often, schools attempt to ban books because of their genre. In both the US and Canada, school boards have moved to ban both *Daddy's*

Roommate and *Heather has Two Mommys*. Both depict healthy same-sex families doing healthy things with healthy, happy kids. Who knows what could happen if we all were so lucky? Maybe school is not only meant to teach us to think, but rather to think in certain ways?

Other banned books that many of us may have read as children are Judy Blume's *Blubber* and *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*. These books have been touchstones for thousands of old kids, letting them know that they are okay when their

peers reject them. Judy Blume took me by the hand through adolescence, but apparently I was misled as her books are allegedly both too sexually graphic and sexually advanced for adolescents.

More banned childhood favourites include Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach* and Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*. It seems

that James doesn't portray positive family values. What was wrong with *A Wrinkle in Time* I can't tell you but we could have a contest to name the most innovative grounds for censorship.

John Steinbeck is unfortunately also a two-time loser, as both *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath* are listed in the top 50 most frequently banned books in the US. These books have been described as "vulgar" and "crass" by opponents of their use in schools. Too bad that Hollywood has made both into movies and corrupted all of our young minds.

Perhaps the most ridiculous case of book banning is the attempt to ban *I Have To Go*, by Robert Munsch. Of course this children's book talks about a very secret and insidious problem, having to pee. In this story a child who has to pee is bundled into a snowsuit. It communicates that talking about having "to go" is okay. Better anyways than the alternative of a very soggy snowsuit.

Jests aside, some of the bannings raise serious questions concerning what books as students and Canadians we have access to. Banned Books On-Line provides, among others, the following as literary works that have been banned in either

Canadian or US school districts:
- *Ulysses* by James Joyce for being obscene
- *Candide* by Voltaire as obscene
- *Canterbury Tales* (Chaucer), *Decameron* (Boccaccio), *Moll Flanders* (Defoe) and *Lysistrata* (Aristophanes) as "lewd", "indecent", "filthy" and "obscene".
- *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman for the use of "explicit language"
- *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain as "racist"
Also Locke, Kant and Lenin are among the many philosophers who have been banned for being "subversive".

Faced with such widespread censorship, it is crucial that we all remain aware of the threat that book banning poses. Once-banned author Maya Angelou says it well in her poem "Still I Rise" (excerpt):

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.
...
Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.
...
Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like treadtops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.
...
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.
...
May there always be something on paper so
challenging it makes us stop and think!

Maybe school is not only meant to teach us to think, but rather to think in certain ways?

Psychologist chronicles sexual abuse of men

MINI CORMIER

THE BRUNSWICKIAN

Seeking for Truth: Voices of Courage and Healing for Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

By Neal King (Harper Perennial)

Open discussion of childhood sexual abuse is less and less stigmatized these days, and thankfully so. For women who have survived such abuse, resources about the problem and about treatment for survivors are abundant. Survivors and panels of experts appear on *Oprah*; the self-help sections of bookstore brim with copies of the latest informative best-sellers; even mainstream women's magazines, which have a habit of avoiding the controversial, regularly include frank articles on recovering from abuse.

For male survivors of sexual abuse, on the other hand, there still seems to be an unspoken taboo on openly discussing the problem. There

are many reasons for this. Yet hope is evident in *Speaking Our Truth* that this situation is also changing.

King's book is an important tool for addressing the needs of male survivors of sexual abuse. King, a professor of psychology with private practice, has chosen to gather a collection of autobiographical writings by abuse survivors. Some were abused by men, some by women, some by other children. Some were abused by family members, still others by strangers. Their testimonials range from brief to several pages long. Some contributors chose to submit poems, and there is also a section showing artwork by an abuse survivor who is now a professional artist. King also includes a valuable list of further readings.

Speaking Our Truth provides a badly needed source of recognition and understanding for male survivors of sexual abuse left ill equipped by society to deal with the terrible trauma they've endured. At times, the book horrifies; the deep anguish and isolation felt by survivors is truly tragic. *Speaking Our Truth* nonetheless shows these men transcending the pain of past experiences to discover opportunity for healing.

MARY ROGAL-BLACK

THE BRUNSWICKIAN

You Never Know by Isabel Huggan

From the humor of the opening paragraph of "End of the Empire," to the quiet wisdom of the last line of "Knowing People," Huggan's ability to write about real life is almost magical. Each story is so involving that it's difficult and at the same time irresistible to move on to the next.

The central voices in eleven of the twelve stories belong to women. They are in different places and situations, but all are fundamentally familiar, partly you or someone you might know. Set in Canada, Africa, France and Scotland, the stories also span such landscapes as motherhood, marriage, sex – "the complexities of our existence," as one

Collection of short stories "fundamentally familiar"

character puts it. "Losing Face" and "Skin the Colour of Money" depict a Canadian woman living in Africa, caught in the impossibility of wanting to somehow fit into a culture from which she is completely removed by her own experience.

Meg, a twenty-one year-old woman, gets a

mildly mentally handicapped, now catatonic as a result of drugs and electroshock therapy. The insight Meg gains into herself and others over the course of the summer is a fine moment in growing up, self-contained and yet natural enough that it seems to have no beginning or end.

Each of the stories is like this, without grand, sensational movements or stunning endings. They are stunning in another way. Huggan's transitions from past to present in the minds of her characters are subtle and seamless. Inner lives are revealed with ease, sensuality, and a sense of the danger of psyches that seem poised between normalcy, such as it is, and insanity. *You Never Know* is a delight. Buy it. Read it. Give it to a friend.

The only problem with Isabel Huggan's book *You Never Know* is trying to decide which of my friends to share it with first.

Would you like to review books for the Brunswickian? Do you have a particular interest that you would like to write about? Call the Brunswickian for info. You get to keep the book...