

SPECTRUM

IN THE PINK

"Equality Time"

by James Gill

I cannot let the opinions in the letter from Messrs. Chase and Cormier last week go unanswered.

They begin by claiming pride in being "normal." If "normal" is being that which is adopted by the majority, then perhaps they are "normal". Homosexuality is not the orientation chosen by most people. However, the use of the word "normal" involves connotations far beyond mere majority opinion or adoption. Is it "normal" to graduate from university? Is it "normal" to be left handed, or a member of a different gender, race, or religion? Would Messrs. Chase and Cormier object to a left handed, black muslim person being a teacher? Surely not, yet that person is by race and religious choice not "normal" by the definition which they appear to use.

They assert that a homosexual can never be an acceptable role model. Who would you look up to, a person who has achieved academic, intellectual, artistic, commercial or political success who happens to be a lesbian, or a pair of undergraduate bigots who have yet to demonstrate any particular claim to excellence? Have either of them ever showed Terry's courage? So we at least have reached the proposition that heterosexuality is no guarantee of respectability.

There are countless authors, artists, musicians, performers, politicians, scholars, business people, doctors, lawyers, and yes, even

teachers who are gay. They make valuable contributions to society, and are (were their sexuality unknown) what I presume these two would expect as role models. It would seem that it is possible to be gay and respectable.

It would seem that they really object to the public declaration of homosexuality. They do not mind a gay or lesbian teacher, provided that it is unknown. This, then, is basic hypocrisy.

I would be willing to wager that both Messrs. Chase and Cormier have been taught by gay or lesbian teachers and professors and that they found those particular instructors to be equally as good as any of their heterosexual instructors. They may deeply resent their children being taught by a homosexual, but the reality of the situation is that they were, and their children will be.

If, God forbid, one of them were to have a gay or lesbian child, what would they do? Would they turn the child out? Would they not want the child to grow up knowing that they could be equal participants in society with no opportunity denied them?

If find it particularly amusing that these two students have asserted that Terry is not an Education student. I find Terry's statement about what he is studying to be far more credible than what is in the Student Directory. If this example is typical of the academic work which they produce, then I would be reluctant to have them teaching in the public school system. Just as much

as it requires individuals who have a basic intellectual capacity.

These students suggest that the gay rights movement is not very popular or acceptable to many people. Will, I do not know their source for that information, but I will tell you mine. In a Gallup poll conducted in 1985, 70% of Canadians stated that they agreed with recommendations to make discrimination against homosexuality illegal. The demographic group with the lowest rate of agreement were those whose mother tongue was neither English nor French where it fell to a mere 57%. In no group did the disapproval rate rise over 33%. To bring the matter even closer to the topic at hand, in a poll of 1500 respondents nationwide conducted by Decima Research, published in *MacLean's*, January 2, 1989, 63% of Canadians stated that if they found out that their child's teacher was a homosexual, they would leave things as they are. Only 19% would try to move their child to a different class, and only 16% would try to remove the teacher. This seems to beg the question whether the views of Messrs. Chase and Cormier are acceptable to the majority of Canadians.

Finally, to assert that one student coming out of the closet brings an entire Faculty into disrepute is nothing short of asinine. When the teaching profession decides to determine those who are and who are not fit to teach our children they should be more concerned with the values being taught, than by the characteristics of the teacher.

Next GALA meeting: Tuesday, February 7 (since this week's was cancelled).

THE WOMAN'S ROOM

by Alexandra Fremont

WHY TAKE WOMEN'S STUDIES?

Women's studies can be defined as the academic manifestation of feminism which emerged some twenty years ago out of women's activism as a result of the pressures exerted by the Women's movement on society. Women aspired to study about themselves in academic surroundings and therefore set about having academic courses credited in educational institutions.

There are three distinct phases through which women have progressed in their organization of women's studies as an area of academic inquiry. In the early 1970s, the focus on feminism turned to consciousness raising. Groups of women would gather anywhere they could to learn from other women and validate their own experiences. As well, courses being offered in educational settings were drawing upon women's experiences. Soon, patterns and similarities were observed in the women's discussions in areas such as employment, home, relationships with men, and leisure.

In the late 1970s/early 1980s, women in university settings noticed how the study of women encompassed many different disciplines. Faculty members and students began to interact as well as question themselves as to why the disciplines were broken up into separate sections. An interdisciplinary approach to women's studies ensued as women's thirst for knowledge broadened.

As recently as 1982, women scholars have attempted to fill in the enormous gaps which have been left out in the pursuit of knowledge; gaps which concern women's contribution to society and to the evolution of society as a whole. Feminist scholarship is striving to purge the androcentricity which exists in educational institutions through programs such as women's studies.

The purpose of women's studies is to transform the systems' processes of creating knowledge; to maintain social, as well as political, commitments to paradigmatic shifts in how people envision the world. There are many debates, even within women's studies, of how this should be done.

Autonomists assert that since universities are "man-centered", a separate discipline for women's studies should be initiated. They envision a faculty which would encompass courses from each of the disciplines with a focus on feminist scholarship.

Integrationists believe that the best strategy is to influence separate disciplines to include studies of women into the curriculum. They would suggest that faculty be reeducated in feminism scholarship which would enable them to enlighten their students as to the role of women in society. Given that a large majority of college students are women (recent Canadian statistics show female enrolment increased 44% since 1981, compared to 18% male enrolment) and that cutbacks are rampant throughout all educational institutions, this strategy has merit.

The university of New Brunswick established a women's studies program in 1986 to offer students the opportunity to study the experiences and achievements of women. The purpose of this program is to provide a more complete and balanced understanding of women and men throughout the ages.

Some would argue that women's studies are geared for women only. Others would dispute this claim. Our society suffers from ignorance; knowledge about women is minimal. By taking courses such as Women's Studies 3003 or 4004, both men and women can educate themselves about women and their struggle towards independence.

NOTE: THIS LEGAL COLUMN IS WRITTEN FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A REPLACEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL LEGAL ADVICE.

LANDLORD AND TENANT: PUBLIC UTILITIES

Have you and your roommates ever argued about the phone or power bill? Have you ever been charged for phone calls no one in your apartment made? Have you ever been stuck with the whole bill after your roommates have gone home? If any to these situations sound familiar, this article may be of interest to you.

Contracting with public utilities is not usually complicated, but sharing the bill with several other people can sometimes lead to problems.

The first thing to note if you plan to share the utility bills with several other people is that generally the utility company will place only one name on the account. It is this person who will be held responsible for payment. Therefore, you really have to trust that your roommates will pay their share. If they don't your only legal recourse would

be to file a claim with Small Claims Court.

In some cases, the utility company may place the account in the names of two people, but they usually prefer to keep it to one. Most utility companies will attempt to have a record of all the people in the apartment who share the service. This is information that may be used if the bill goes unpaid. Legally, however, only the person who contracted with the utility can be held liable.

The first thing that the utility will do is warn you that payment on your bill is overdue and that if they do not receive your payment, the service will be disconnected. After this, your file may be handed over to a collection agency. Even if you move to another province, the collection agency is likely to track you down. One thing that NBTel will often do to locate you is

look up your calling records and track you down through the most frequently called numbers.

As long as you have a bill outstanding with a utility company, you will not be able to obtain that service until it is paid up. Even if you move to another province, your bad credit rating is likely to follow you so that you may have difficulty obtaining such a service or any sort of credit.

The utility company may also take legal recourse in order to force you to pay any money you owe. When the amount is less than \$1,000, they will file a claim with Small Claims Court. If you owe more than \$1,000, do not be surprised if you find yourself involved in a formal lawsuit.

This question often arises with regard to being billed for phone calls that no one in your apartment make. The best thing to do in this case is to

immediately inform the company which issued the bill. The utility companies are usually quite reasonable in dealing with such matters.

Yes. This is not a good idea for trying to save money as the utility companies have ways to tell if the service is being stolen. For example, the power company can tell if their meter has been tampered with, and the cable television companies can electronically detect illegal connections. Obtaining the use of such a service without paying for it is a criminal offence that can result in a maximum punishment of two years in jail.

Always remember to have the power, telephone, etc. disconnected or transferred to another person's name when you leave your apartment. If you fail to do this you may be held responsible for the services used, ever after you have moved out.

By Alla

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