

Knowledge, advice and an expensive cup of tea

by Patricia Smyth

If all people knew what each said of the other, there would not be four friends in the world. - Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

I see that you have survived another week. Well done! You got that first paper out after all didn't you...even though it was the first one you have written in ten years, or your whole life. Did too much research didn't you? Now, did you give yourself enough time to study for the mid-term? Can you read your notes? Did you stay up too late the night before cramming? Did you over prepare? Have you found the Writing Skills Lab yet? You have learned a lot this week, haven't you?

I'll keep my message short because I have a mid-term in the morning at 8:30 and I still want to work in time for a bubble bath...that's one way that I unwind (Don't spread it around but I also read the National Enquirer while I soak.)

Other members, of course, have found different ways to relieve tension. Our past-president, Mark Fletcher, for instance, pens letters.

It just so happens he pressed one into my hand the other night just hours before he departed for the West coast of Canada to begin a career as a Drama teacher. (I think he also cracked a few of my ribs with all the farewell hugs.) Well, I neglected to read the letter until after I had promised him that I would see that it was published in the Bruns. And a promise is a promise, right? Well, Mark, here it is:

Dear Friends and Foe,

I have been so busy the past few weeks working and packing my life in suitcases and boxes that I haven't found the time to stop by and say so long to my many friends at UNB.

Yes, it's true. I'm moving to the west coast and I'm very excited. However, I am leaving with mixed feelings.

The past few years have been fabulous. I can say I have fully enjoyed my years at UNB but I feel I can't leave without saying good-bye and thank you to the many people who have made this such a memorable experience. I would like to thank the many people of the Student Union and CAMPUS for all the great times and memories. Notably, Pat Smyth and Kim Goodine, Marlene, Marlene and Glenna, the SU Executive and all the people at the Department of Extension, the Alumni Office and administration.

Although my time at UNB hasn't been without its challenges and shortcomings on my part, I am leaving this campus with the feeling that I have made a valuable contribution to the quality of student life, and I am proud of all my accomplishments.

I must admit, however, that I was somewhat concerned of late by the slander and character assassination attempted by a few people. I know I have absolutely nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about and I would like to challenge these people to fill my boots as well as I have (of course, for you ___ ___, that will be a very difficult challenge as it requires walking upright.)

On the whole, it has been a great experience and I will always cherish the memories and all the fun I've had and the friends I've made. Best of luck to all and God bless.

Mark Fletcher.

Well, Mark, since you blessed us with your inventory, I'd like to share a little verse of Dorothy Parker's that always gives me a little life when I'm saddened by the behaviour of either myself or others: Inventory Four be the thing I am wiser to know: Idleness,

sorrow, a friend and a foe. Four be the things I'd been better without: Love, curiosity, freckles, and doubt. Three be the things I shall never attain: Envy, content, and sufficient champagne. Three be the things I shall have till I die: Laughter and hope and a sock in the eye. Hope you have a good week folks. Come and share part of it with us on

ZOOMER VIEWS

Tuesday or Friday in the Old Arts Building, Third Floor, from 11:30 to 1:30.
Three be the things that we have at

UNB:
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Canada and pluralism

Continued from page 8

affirmed and supported. But such views are considered to be merely personal - someone's (or some groups) private values, beliefs, opinions - and hence should not be supported in the public realm.

And so we marginalize, if not trivialize, what some do indeed affirm as true, good and right. Religious views hardly enter seriously into the discussion. They are considered "off limits".

Our educational system tends to perpetuate this approach. Many schools pretend that Santa Claus is a non-offensive alternative to an "offensive" Christmas pageant. Elementary and secondary education ignores rather than explores courses about religion. And so what forms the very core of what many hold to be crucial to their existence is not studied, as if it was not important. And that is exactly what many of our youth come to believe. Little wonder then that the "wisdom of the ages" is all but lost on our youth, and that "wealth" and "prosperity" is understood largely (and narrowly) in economic terms. But what will come to fill the spiritual vacuum when even the Lord's Prayer - the last vestige of a Christian past - is banned from the schools?

While the ignorance of religion may indeed not disturb some, it goes against the very grain of others. In fact, there are many - individuals and groups - who disagree fundamentally with the liberal view. Many do not share a vision of life which relegates religious beliefs or world views to the margins, or to mere belief or opinion.

Furthermore, such a liberal view frequently leads to distortion. For example, how often do we not hear in the Western media that the major crisis in the former Soviet Union is economic. It may come as a big surprise to many that this is indeed not the case. The major crisis in the Commonwealth of Independent States is spiritual, not economic. People in these newly formed political entities are desperate in their search for a new spiritual vision of life, a new sense of how to live freed from the clutches of a totalitarian and repres-

sive state. The present spiritual vacuum cannot be filled by Western consumerism. Vaclav Havel, for one, finds it as spiritually empty as communism. But, do our news reports ever speak about this?

One cannot argue that Native peoples, Muslims, Evangelical Christians and others are primitive in their thinking, and that they haven't caught up to those more rational. For the most, this is indeed not the case. Many of them disagree fundamentally with the dominant liberal view that reason must dominate and that religious beliefs ought or can remain private. In fact, many argue that the dominant liberal view is itself a religious vision, and they disagree fundamentally with it. Unfortunately, this vision reigns supreme in the public forum. What then of our pluralistic Canada?

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