

Blood n' Thunder

(continued)
**AQUINIAN B.O.D. RETORTS
 TO SCULLY LETTER**

To the Editor:
 In the February 17th issue of *The Brunswickan*, Sean Scully raged that *The Aquinian* is a "rag sheet" which "reflects poorly upon St. Thomas University". Mr. Scully's letter is misinformed, and is a discredit to the many hours a large number of St. Thomas students contribute in order to provide their university with a quality source of information.

Furthermore, Mr. Scully's claim that only a "select few" get to publish in *The Aquinian* is completely misguided: at least 86 students have already contributed articles and ideas this year, and *The Aquinian* would welcome even more students getting involved.

Mr. Scully also accuses that Editor-in-Chief Terri Ensor "only prints articles which she personally agrees with." This statement is misleading, because it implies that when Ms. Ensor rejects an article, it is for purely personal reasons.

If Mr. Scully has any knowledge of journalism, he should know that it is the editor's prerogative to refuse to print an article. No editor, whether it is for a student newspaper or otherwise, would be foolish enough to print just any article that is submitted—it must be deemed to be quality writing and in keeping with that newspaper's goals.

One of *The Aquinian's* main goals, as written in its constitution, is "to foster a sense of community at St. Thomas". The "quality column" which Mr. Scully says Ms. Ensor failed to publish was in fact one written by him, entitled "A Blurred View Rum Row!" At *The Aquinian* Board of Directors meeting on February 8, Ms. Ensor circulated copies of the article, and it was unanimously decided that she was right not to have published the article, as it was one-sided and offensive to the St. Thomas community.

Had Mr. Scully cared to show up at that meeting, or at any meeting for that matter, he could have expressed his point of view and would have realised that Ms. Ensor's reasons for rejecting his article were not personal.

—Aquianian Board of Directors

**WHEW! WHAT A
 GENERALIZATION!**

Dear Editor,
 I am writing in response to the comments made by Julie Broczkowski concerning the lingerie contest. I strongly supported and agreed with what this person was saying until she moved on to summarise the feminist movement in one sentence. The precise comment that I find fault with is that "The Victorian puritan attitudes of the politically correct feminist movement stifle the power of women; the different, female power, by saying that everyone is the same and that sex is bad." Whew! What a generalization! The odds are pretty low that this comment didn't offend or confuse at least a couple of feminists!

The reason I say this? The facts are that most feminists (I'm not generalising all feminists) view the Victorian Period of history as one of the most repressive to the rights and personal freedoms of women, including the stifling of women's sexuality. To associate the feminist movement with these "Victorian puritan" attitudes towards sexuality is just incorrect. It also is dumping on many women that are actively involved in the struggle to free women of the societal chains that repress women's sexual expression. Keep in mind that it was not mere coincidence that the Sexual Revolution and the Women's Liberation Movement occurred within the same decade. We cannot forget that these were two movements that complimented and fuelled each other in the pursuit of liberation from societal repressions and hang-ups.

If I were to venture forth and make any generalisations, it would be to argue that the feminist movement is about the ability of females to express themselves equally with males in our society. Whether that be

politically, economically, or sexually, the feminist movement, bottom line, is about women gaining an equal voice. It's all about expressing the "power" and "sexiness" that Julie Broczkowski championed so well in her article. For these points I applaud her. It's the misuse and generalization of the sexual attitudes of the feminist movement that I find fault with.

—Angela Hubbard

**GUNS: SOME PERSUADING
 ARGUMENTS AGAINST
 THEIR CONTROL**

Dear Editor,
 Alan Rock and others in parliament state that Canadians are overwhelmingly in support of the proposed "gun control legislation." What exactly then do these polls tell us? There are approximately three million gun owners in Canada. Many, though certainly not all, live in rural areas. Most are hunters and/or members of shooting clubs. The guns that they have are legally owned and acquired. They are used and stored in a manner that complies with the ever changing law. The majority of Canadians however are not gun owners. Most live in urban centres and do not hunt or competitively shoot. Many have never fired a gun or would not even know people that own one. Many cannot understand why people hunt and others see no reason why people want to own guns at all.

Given this, the opinion polls are not surprising. Most citizens are apathetic because they do not see the issue as directly affecting them. Couple this with the dubious belief that more legislation will eradicate violent crime and most people when asked would agree to it. For the little that most Canadians know about firearms I would suspect that they know less about the law that applies to them. Firearm ownership in Canada is intensely regulated. The F.A.C. (issued by the province!) dictates who can legally buy a firearm and there are numerous provisions dealing with their transport and safe storage. Most Canadians would also not know that violent crime committed with firearms has been steadily declining since 1989. The proposed legislation has nothing to do with crime: it is about identifying a minority who currently are in lawful possession of firearms.

Mr. Rock states that legal gun owners have nothing to worry about. Nothing could be further from the truth! The identification of firearm owners who lawfully own, use and store guns has absolutely nothing to do with criminal law. Neither do the amendments which would effectively eliminate Canada's Olympic shooting team by prohibiting the firearms they train with. Mandatory registration will not curb what violent crime that does occur. No one with an ounce of criminal intent will acknowledge that they own a firearm and then annually pay the government to keep it. Consider the sale of cocaine or other narcotics. The law is that possession and use of this drug is absolutely forbidden. No one can be a legal owner. Thus selling it always has and continues to be a major offense. Despite this obvious fact an illegal supply seems to meet the illegal demand. The same would occur with firearms and criminals. Mr. Rock once admitted that, (some day) he would like to see possession of all firearms in Canada restricted to the police and the military. With due respect to both institutions I can honestly say that I do not want to live in a country like that. In fact many Canadians immigrated to this country to escape such laws.

All Canadians, legal gun owners and gun haters alike want to see violent offenders punished. Canadians are safer when habitual violent offenders serve sentences that reflect the severity of their crimes. Removing the repeat offender is crime control. Mandatory registration is not. The Criminal Code as it exists allows for severe punishment for those convicted of an indictable offense involving the use of a firearm. The last thing needed is more laws that do not address the problem. The fact is that the courts have plenty of teeth: they just don't do enough biting.

—Mr. Brian C. McLean

SPECTRUM



Forest Breeze

"Keep an Open Mind"

by Michèle MacNeil

Since the most primitive of times, trees have been used among other things for shelter, food, transportation, recreation, and communication. It seems impossible to imagine a world without wood, since so much of our livelihood depends on this essential RENEWABLE resource. I emphasize the importance of the word renewable because lately it seems that "extremists" will try to have you believe that foresters are destroying our planet by doing what they've done for hundreds of years, which is to harvest trees. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not advocating the unregulated clearcutting of our country, rather the awareness that, yes trees can be harvested, and the site can be planted with new trees which will grow in their place.

Over the last decade the emergence of extremists heading environmental groups has led to bitter conflicts with the forest industry. The main problem lies in the fact

that many of these radical groups or leaders have given a bad name to environmentalists. I say this because I am an environmentalist as well as a forester who realizes the necessity for continuous research for better forest management. We all have a common interest which is the forest, therefore rather

than gains. Although it has been a slow process, many forest companies now realize the importance of integrating various aspects of the forest and manage on a landscape rather than stand level. Managing our ecosystems so that they can sustain and reap maximum benefits is a tall order; how-

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ever, if all parties involved realize the need for compromise, I believe we will improve our forest management. New technologies as well as regulations on cutting practices have improved the quality of many sites due to less soil degradation and more slash being left in the forest for nutrients. Wildlife, recreation, and aesthetic are becoming a growing part of forest management plans. We still have a lot to learn, but as long as we look at all benefits, we will be moving forward rather than being at a standstill due to extreme viewpoints. Keep an open mind and stay informed.

than trying to create habitat for a single species or managing for a sole resource, we must try to find ways to generate the most benefits possible. When an extreme view is expressed, be it from the environmental or the industry side, there are far greater losses

Metanoia

by John Walk

Truths and Lies

In a recent article entitled "On Christian Scholarship", Alvin Plantinga, professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, speaks of the impact of relativism on the humanities. Relativism is that perspective which denies objective truth or certainty, or at least that we can know it. No one perspective has the inside track, it claims. Each is unique. Each has its own truthful and valid insights.

Such an approach has its appeal. It forces us, for example, to recognize that we might learn something from others, that no one can know it all, and that values are culturally bound. It challenges us to be inclusive, to listen, be open, and respectful of others. It confronts us with the notion that what is right, just and truthful is not a simple matter. In fact, our understanding of these may be coloured by the perspective from which we come. Indeed, what may be right, just and truthful for one person may be the exact opposite for another.

At first glance much of this appears attractive, even helpful. But ultimately how helpful is it, or how open? Relativism is not as open as it asserts. It is quite dogmatic in its rejection of any position that is not inclusive. Hence, it is as exclusive as any other position, though this is seldom recognized or admitted.

More serious is relativism taken to the extreme. For example, if there are no objective truths or values, then one's morals, values or sense of justice can quickly be reduced to a pedestrian "well, that's your opinion". To reduce another's views to mere opinion is really to dismiss them as having any value. What have we gained then?

Plantinga argues that these views have an eroding influence in our society, especially on our moral and intellectual pursuits. To illustrate he points to the views of the currently popular philosopher Richard

Rorty. Plantinga reduces Rorty's position (perhaps ungraciously) to the following: "truth is whatever my peers will let me get away with saying." If Plantinga is correct about Rorty then the consequences of holding Rorty's position may cause us to reconsider the pursuit of truth as noble and praiseworthy.

Most people in the West felt that the Chinese authorities did something monstrous in murdering hundreds of students in Tiananmen Square. More heinous was that they then denied that a student uprising occurred. In all of this, Rorty would argue according to Plantinga, that the Chinese authorities were really trying to estab-

lish true that there is no God. To what extent are Canadians satisfied in allowing each of these assertions to stand? Are they truths or lies?

There are no lies in relativism, according to Plantinga, if the assertions are permitted to stand, either in law or in the public's perception. That's an added bonus.

Are there really no objective truths or values, only subjective opinions and choices? Is it possible that even if a majority of people claim, for example that abortion is only a "medical procedure", that the assertion is nonetheless a falsehood? Is it merely one's opinion that establishes the existence or non-existence of God? Or, to put it differently, does God's existence depend on the assertions of people? Are humans the measure of all things?

Perhaps there are objective truths, values, or principles. Is it not the case, for example, that honesty is to be valued over dishonesty, justice over injustice, courage over cowardice, good over evil, living over killing, God over non-God, regardless in which society or culture

one lives? Each society may differ in its interpretations of these principles, but they remain nonetheless. Humans do not determine them, they are simply there. Then one might also ask of their origin. Further, to believe them to be universal is to believe them to be true, for everyone. To believe in them is also to be committed to them.

According to Plantinga, Rorty and others argue that commitment to these objective truths and values is futile, foolhardy, and naive. In fact, commitment of any kind is self-delusion, except a commitment to be free-floating and roaming. If that is the path of wisdom, I'm not convinced. Further, I think it is simply not true, and I don't mind saying so.

"The 'prochoice' movement asserts as true that abortion is a 'medical procedure', not the killing of a live fetus, a pre-born human being. Tobacco companies affirm as true that smoking does not kill. . . . Are they truths or lies?"

I wish the truth, and who

can blame them for that? They were trying to convince their peers (and the rest of the world) that although a few undesirables were killed there was no student uprising. They were successful to a degree. For some (many?) Chinese no student uprising occurred.

There are other examples of attempts to establish truth. Holocaust deniers assert as true that although numerous Jews (as well as Poles, Russians, Ukrainians) were killed in World War II there was no Jewish Holocaust, that is, a concerted effort at a wholesale annihilation of the Jews. The "prochoice" movement asserts as true that abortion is a "medical procedure", not the killing of a live fetus, a pre-born human being. Tobacco companies affirm as true that smoking does not kill. Atheists claim as