

Last Tango – offensive ?

We've all heard of the Marlon Brando movie "Last Tango in Paris" that caused such a furor in the press a couple of years ago but unless you saw it elsewhere you never did get to see it in Halifax. Well all that may change in a few short months due to the unrelenting efforts of one Nova Scotian. Gerard McNeil, one time editor of the Dartmouth Free Press, has finally won the right in the Supreme Court of Canada to contest the ruling of the Nova Scotia Board of Censors in the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.

There is more at stake here than just whether or not "Last Tango" will eventually play in a theatre near you. The whole question of whether a Censors Board is even legal or constitutional in this or any other province of Canada will be determined by this particular case. "Last Tango in Paris" was not banned in Nova Scotia because it was "obscene" as defined by the Criminal Code but because the Nova Scotia Censors Board considered it "offensive". Had the movie been determined obscene by a court of law Mr. McNeil would have no case but offensiveness is not against the law.

When McNeil first decided to take on the board of censors they didn't exactly laugh in his face but they didn't pay much attention to him either. It was one thing for him to write nasty editorials about them however, and quite another thing for him to take them to court. It took McNeil and his lawyer, Robert Murrant, over a year, \$15,000 and a decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to even win the right to put the case before the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.

When McNeil took his case to the Supreme Court of Canada to have them determine whether or not he actually could challenge provincial censorship laws three other provinces, Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan argued on behalf of Nova Scotia. Of course it is obvious what their stake in this matter is - should Nova Scotia's censorship board be declared unconstitutional then any private citizen in any other Province could successfully challenge that Province's Censors Board using the McNeil case as a precedent.

The whole issue of censorship is one which brings forth heated opinions on both sides of the fence. Those in favor of some form of censorship seem to think that the general public needs to be "protected" from what they consider immoral or "offensive"

films, books, etc. If the general public consisted of imbeciles or children under the age of 16 then there might be some point to the argument in favor of censorship. However, the general public consists mainly of adults who presumably can be considered responsible enough to elect their own leaders in government, pay taxes, drive cars, purchase alcohol, marry, procreate, etc. Now it would seem to us that if the general public can be considered responsible enough to do all these things then they can be considered responsible enough to choose what movies they will see and what books they will read.

Should an individual adult decide that a particular movie is offensive he / she can do one of two things - not go to that movie in the first place or leave the theatre when the film becomes offensive to him / her. The same thing obviously applies to books or plays or shows of any kind. In other words, if you find nudity offensive don't go out of your way to visit nudist camps or strip shows - you won't like them

This is supposed to be a free and democratic country but the very existence of a Censors Board refutes this. What kind of equality exists when Nova Scotians are not allowed to see "Last Tango in Paris" because it is considered "offensive" but adults in every other Canadian province can see the film if they so choose?

At a great personal expense to himself Gerard McNeil is fighting an injustice that affects all of us. His case will come before the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia on September 29 and if the decision is favourable we will all owe this man a tremendous vote of thanks. In our opinion an excellent way of showing our gratitude would be to join with those others who have contributed funds to a trust account that has been set up to help pay the enormous court and legal fees. So far it has cost Mr. McNeil over \$15,000 just to win the right to be heard in court at the end of this month. If the case has to go on to the Supreme Court of Canada again it will eventually cost McNeil another \$15,000. The Gazette would like as many of its readers as possible to contribute to Mr. McNeil's fight for our rights. A dollar from every Dalhousie student would go a long way towards paying off McNeil's costs this far. Contributions can be sent to Censorship Fund, Box 812, Dartmouth.

Canada's Oldest College Newspaper

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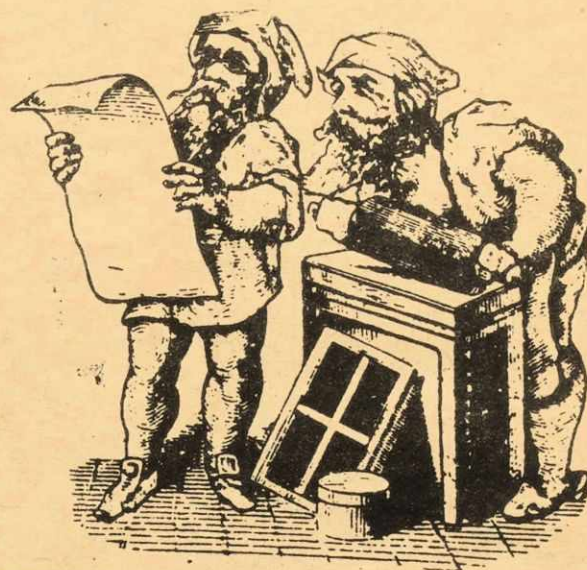
Room 334, Student Union Building, 424-2507
Subscription Rates: \$5.00 per year (27 issues)

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Letters

To the new GAZETTE:

This letter comes in response to the fluctuating visual appearance of the first two (and a few more to come) issues of the Gazette, and the article in the first issue discussing the face-lift. If you read the above mentioned article, you will discover at the end of this letter that I was mentioned as being one of the students who worked on the re-design of the Gazette.

I would like to mention that I was just one of a group of nine design students who undertook the re-design tasks as one of our class projects. Our group was studying under the instructor, Hanno Ehses, in the visual communication II section of the design program at the Nova Scotia College of Art and

Design. The original concept of trying to re-design the Gazette came from the instructor, Hanno Ehses, (later, also proposed by Donna Bulgan).

Upon arriving as a new instructor in the design division of the college, Hanno had the unfortunate experience of encountering the messy format imitation (taken from the Rolling Stone) and the muddy visual appearance of last year's Gazette. Because of this and his desire to see the Gazette improved, Hanno put forth the task of re-designing the paper.

Hopefully the above mentioned will straighten out the background facts regarding the re-design of the Gazette. For you avid readers, you