

SPECTRUM

IN THE PINK

"Gay and Lesbian Activism"

by James Gill

"So what is it about those pushy fags and dykes anyway?"

Amid all of the accusations concerning my hidden agenda, and the cries about the Brunswickan turning itself into gay newspaper, this question seems to be the central theme. Well, since I am one of those pushy fags, albeit a moderate one, I suppose it falls to me to answer that question.

Let us make it clear at the outset that the Brunswickan is not becoming a gay newspaper. Those interested in seeing what a gay newspaper really looks like, should pick up a free copy of the Gazette from Halifax at Dancetraz, or Westminster Books. It is not as well put together as some I have seen, but it is still worth reading, and had good regional content. In reality the Brunswickan is exactly what it should be, a student newspaper. I am simply one student who has actually made the effort to get out and write down my opinions, submitting them for publication.

"In the Pink" is, and always has been an expression of my own opinions. I do not pretend to speak for the gay and lesbian community or for GALA. Indeed, the lesbian and gay community is so diverse as to make it almost impossible to focus it on any particular position. I would like to think that I have a good deal of support from the community, though.

I would like to take my hat off to Marcel LeBrun. Although I fundamentally disagree with his arguments, I respect the fact that he has made that same effort. His pieces have served to contribute to the discussion which I have tried to foster through this column.

I neither expect, nor particularly want the views which I express to be adopted blindly by my readers. Rather, I would like to see them adopt their own views on the issues which I raise. I do not expect that many heterosexuals can understand our situation, even to the extent (limited, perhaps) that we can understand them. After all, we all grew up in a heterosexist environment. What I would expect, though, is that people would understand that a substantial portion of the population is being persecuted, and take out representations of that persecution of face value. Combining this awareness with a minimal feeling of social justice should provide the support we need to achieve our legitimate aims of equality and protection. Even if you hold homosexuality to be morally wrong, can you translate that into an assertion that the discrimination and violence we face are acceptable?

Responsible members of society cannot ignore the world around them. We justify our concerns for social justice for all people. Human rights violations take place much closer to home, though. People are discriminated against, assaulted, and even killed here in Canada. We cannot be content to take up only the fashionable causes.

Implicit in the statement that opened this column is the idea that things would be all right if we were not so vocal and visible-if we stayed in our closets. It is felt, somehow, that we invite out harassment by proclaiming our difference. This is a reflection of a belief, that seems to be astonishingly widely held, that if we ignore a problem, it will go away. It is also a reflection of the view that things would be a lot better if everyone could be just like the mainstream.

For centuries this has been the fundamental nature of our oppression. We have been forced to hide, and our fundamental characteristic was called, "The love which dare not speak its name." Well, that love is now fairly screaming from the rafter. We will face harassment regardless of whether we are in or out of our closets but when we are out we can fight. Closets do to stand for privacy, they stand for prison.

So what it is about those pushy fags and dykes is awareness. If we do not allow people to ignore social injustice in their own backyards, then maybe they will help us do something about it.

Welcome to the "Gay Nineties."

Next GALA Meeting: Tuesday, January 16, at 8:00 pm in Room 203 of the SUB. Prof. Grace Getty will be speaking about safer sex.

LEGAL EASE

PROPERTY RIGHTS

The concept of property is usually quite straightforward. When you own something, you are in a position to decide how it will be used. For example, if you own a car, you may drive it yourself, or lend it to someone else. Also, you can alter it in some way, such as by painting it. You may also sell it, thus transferring these rights to another person. If you don't own that car, your rights with regard to it are more limited. You may have leased the car or borrowed it, so that you have a right to use it, but you do not have the right to sell it, or alter it in any way.

Problems with regard to property rights are quite easily resolved when ownership of something is clearly defined. However, in some cases, ownership may be unclear. As well, in some cases the subject-matter is not capable of being owned by anyone. The following are examples of things that cannot be owned:

(1) LAND

It might come as a surprise that no-one actually "owns" land. All land in Canada is actually owned by the Crown and is merely granted to people for their use. When you purchase land, you actually buy the right to use the land. This right belongs to you exclusively. This means that you actually control the land and no-one may interfere with your use of it, unless you are doing something that is a nuisance to you neighbours. The Crown or state does reserve the right to "expropriate" the land, or take it away from you, if necessary. Also, you can be forced to put the land up for sale if you are unable to pay the mortgage or taxes on it.

(2) AIR

No-one owns the air above the land, although a person who owns the land has the right to make a reasonable use of the airspace above the land.

(3) WATER

Water is generally not owned by anyone, but it is possible to own the right to use it.

(4) THE HUMAN BODY - THE STORY OF "FRED THE SKELETON"

While you are alive, you own your body. You may do with it as you please. For example, you can donate your blood. You can also make provisions for parts of your body to be donated to science or medicine after you die. However, when a person dies, no-one else is entitled to one that body. Generally, the right to possess that body is given to a parent or a spouse in order that the body be properly disposed of. The possession, however, is for this purpose only.

In this context an interesting legal battle took place in Hartland, NB last year. In May of 1988, a skeleton was discovered in a warehouse by firefighters who were called to put out a fire. The skeleton was the 100-year old body of a 30-40 year-old male which had been used by the Knights of Pythias in their secret rituals. The Knights of Pythias were angered when the skeleton, which was nicknamed Fred, was seized. They were of the opinion that they were its owners, and so should get it back. However, since it is not legally possible to own the body of a dead person, the Knights of Pythias agreed to have Fred properly buried in April of 1989.

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

FIRST, THE WHITE PELICAN.
NOW, THE WOOD BISON.



These two animals are no longer endangered in Canada.

You may not have known that they were ever endangered. But consider this. You share a life support system with all the wildlife on this planet. Every day, three species disappear. Animals like the Great Auk, The Dawson Caribou and the Passenger Pigeon. And plant life that can never be recovered. When a species is threatened, your life system is threatened.

World Wildlife Fund gets results. Both in Canada and around the world. Currently, we are supporting more than 200 projects in Canada. We're also helping to save the Giant Panda in China. The Tropical Rain Forest in Costa Rica. And more. Your donations will help. Every single cent you give will help save wildlife. Remember, it's your life, too.

Find out how you can help World Wildlife Fund get results. Write: 60 St. Clair Ave. E., Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1N5 Or call:

(416) 923-8173



A NEWSPAPER COLUMN

ORDERED COLUMNS

JUST LIKE EVERYONE IN MY FIRST

class of any given Friday Moming, I was pawing through the Brunswickan, completely ignoring my prof, and trying to stay awake with a cup of suicide coffee. Later, I would discover that the Bruns makes an ideal pillow to put on top of all those nasty text books.

So during one of these particular classes, I decided that the news-paper was missing a column of intelligence, uncompromising de-tail, and the finest scholastic opinion. Of course, I can't write anything ever close to that; so instead, I opted for plugging out about 300 words of dribel per week.

"Why, Dale?" you might ask, if you were in the same room with me and you actually cared. "Why would you waste valuable Univer-sity time to write a column when your average is approaching Q - , and especially when you could be spending that valuable University time making the Social Club's beer signs fuzziier and fuzziier?"

"Well," I would answer you proudly, "I'm doing it for fortune, fame, and babes." (This particular answer never fails to make any present Brunswickan staff member snort and chuckle until they turn a peasant shade of mauve.)

Fortune and fame are pretty much out of the question, since: a) I'm not getting paid, and b) our entire geographical circulation is equal to the circumference of a moth altered by a pick-up truck windshield doing about 120. Furthermore, I'm told that no Brunswickan columnist has ever had to "Babe - Proof" his house, living in fear that, at any moment, a "Babe - Swarm" could attack.

So, basically, I'm doing a column in order to get invited to free Bruns parties and to have the ability to, every week, make fun of people, like Wayne Carson, who take themselves a little too seriously.

Now maybe, if I'm really lucky, my marks will plummet to a Z+, and, if you're like me, you'll now quietly fold up this paper, use it as a pillow, and try to get some sleep.

Dale Geddes