

EDITORIAL

The battle lines of the nineties are becoming drawn more and more often across ethnic lines. Ethnicity, in the purest sense of the word, is a means of dividing the population by race, culture and language. However the term in the nineties has taken on a different and much more negative connotation. It is heard increasingly in reference to the violent conflicts between what were once amiable neighbours who stemmed from different origins particularly in the countries of Bosnia and Rwanda.

In Canada where we claim the distinction of being a cultural mosaic with each of us holding tightly to his/her own ethnic identity while identifying with some nebulous definition of what it really means to be a Canadian, our own intolerance of different ethnic groups moved into the forefront with the recent revelation that CSIS was involved in and connected to individuals in the white supremacist group *The Heritage Front*.

The Brunswickan recently received a poorly typed letter displaying the grammatical prowess of a four year old, and filled with xenophobic hatred. This drivel contained accusations which, had the author not spelled out exactly who it was that they were opposed to, could have equally been applied to almost any ethnic grouping.

Our attempts to locate the author(s) of the letter failed as they omitted to include a return address with their letter. Our search for the authors ended with our tracing the post mark to one of the main mail sorting stations in Toronto. Perhaps being from Toronto they did not realise that the Brunswickan's editorial policy is to not print anything racist, sexist or homophobic. In any event while we do not usually edit letters to the editor this particular letter required editing to run, even as a graphic illustration. Is this intolerance upon our part? Or is it political correctness perhaps? No, we just think this is the right way to deal with drivelous spew.



The following is an open letter to my brand new neighbour, university president, Robin Armstrong.

Hi, Mr. Armstrong. My name is Mark. Mark Morgan. Luckily for me I live right beside you on Waterloo Row. You know the big old white house with the I-think-it's-brown doors. I always make it a habit to get acquainted with my neighbours. I guess it makes me feel safe to know that I'm not living next door to a psycho, the Manson family or someone along those lines. I have been led to believe from the Connells, my landlords, that you've never asked to visit or invited them over to your house. I want to correct that oversight and take this distinct privilege to invite you and Mrs. Armstrong to my room for a pizza and Pepsi. If you don't like Pepsi I'm sure I can get you some Coca-Cola. I would try and whip up a home cooked meal for you and the Mrs. but unfortunately while I'm boarding, the Connells don't allow me access to their kitchen facilities. Hey, I have a great idea. Why don't you invite me over to your house for dinner. I noticed last week that you had a small garden party for about forty of your closest friends. I felt sad because I'm your neighbour and you never even invited me. Maybe at your next party you could invite me. I promise I'll keep my elbows off the table and chew with my mouth closed and if I don't you can send me home with a doggie bag as punishment. I really hope we could do a lot of lunches together because it's really expensive to get a Beaver meal plan. I know you care for your student's finances and plus it is the neighbourly thing to do so I'll be looking forward to eating with you.

I also noticed that you have a great looking lawn and a wide variety of flowers. My cousin Chris and his fiancée Marlene make me mow their lawn for free. I don't mind since they feed me well. They have a whole bunch of flowers similar to yours. They shelled out over three hundred dollars and I saw that you had way more than they had. Boy, you and Mrs. Armstrong sure do have green thumbs to plant those all by yourselves.

Well Mr. & Mrs. Armstrong here's to us as the best of pals for the upcoming year.

It's a beautiful day in the neighbourhood. A beautiful day in the neighbourhood...etc Won't you be my neighbour



Blood n' Thunder

To the Editor:

The GRE (LSAT et cetera) is a grueling exam that one will probably write only once in his or her lifetime.

The GRE preparatory test manuals are, therefore, an indispensable guide to the graduate school aspirant.

The discovery of errors in such manuals, given the Ph.D.-laden advisory boards of each, is, I am sure you will agree, scandalous.

The enclosed article details some of the errors I found. Wouldn't it be interesting to know how extensive these errors are?

If you run the article (no remuneration intended), would you kindly send me a copy of the issue? I would appreciate it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
David A. Scott

GRE TEST MANUALS: HOW ACCURATE ARE THEY?

by David A. Scott

Solve the following problem in logic and then we'll have a little discussion about scholarship.

The headmaster of a girl's school is selecting a committee of students to attend a national conference. The students eligible to attend are Joy, Debbie, Edie, Linda, Millie, Pam, and Judy. The committee must be selected given the following considerations.

If Judy is elected, Edie must be selected.

If both Edie and Debbie are selected, then Joy cannot be selected.

If both Debbie and Joy are selected, then Millie cannot be selected.

If Joy is selected, then either Linda or Pam must be selected, but Linda and Pam cannot both be selected.

Either Linda or Millie must be selected, but Linda and Millie cannot both be selected.

If Pam and three other students are selected, which of the following groups can accompany Pam?

- (A) Joy, Debbie, and Millie
- (B) Joy, Edie, and Millie
- (C) Joy, Debbie, and Judy
- (D) Joy, Judy, and Linda
- (E) Edie, Linda, and Judy

If your answer is (B), you are correct according to the *GRE General Test* preparatory manual published by the Research & Education Association (Piscataway, New Jersey). However, you would be only half right, because, as it happens, (E) is also correct. The explanation for the answer (B) in the manual states that (E) cannot be right because Linda and Pam cannot be selected together—but that is only true when Joy is selected.

This is one of the several errors I found in this manual which bills itself as "The Best Test Preparation for the GRE General Test." As I expressed it in a letter to the publishers, the discovery of errors made me wonder about the accuracy of the rest of the manual. The masthead of this manual boasts ten consultants, seven of whom hold Ph.D.'s. I have yet to receive a reply from any of them.

Getting into graduate school is very much a function of a good score on the GRE, or Graduate Record Examination. It is a grueling exam that tests one's mathematical, logical, and verbal skills, within oppressive time constraints. The test manual is an important tool for honing one's knowledge and abilities in these areas and for familiarizing oneself with the form and content of the test. It is crucial that the manuals reflect the actual exam.

Once you find errors that can be quantified, you start to wonder about interpretive areas, like the relationship between words. Which word is most opposite in meaning to malefaction: (A) affinity, (B) subsidy, (C) profligation (D) idi-

osyncratic, or (E) cognate? "Certainly a subsidy (aid) would be the opposite of malefaction (an evil deed)," says the manual. Would its authors hold then that Syria or Iran's subsidization of terrorists is an example of beneficence? In my view, subsidy is a neutral word, where evil obviously is not. Evil is harmful, injurious, destructive. Affinity is the force holding atoms—and people—together. My choice was (A) and it's still (A).

Once I began to question several of the answers, I began to wonder if the GRE people had a different way of looking at language than I did, a way that I would have to figure out if I wanted to do well on the exam. Paranoia set in.

On the back cover of their manual, the Research & Education Association promises that "All of the exam sections were prepared by test experts in the particular subject fields to assure the accuracy and difficulty of the exam questions." (Emphasis added). The publishers of these manuals have an obligation to produce an error-free product, not only because that's what I paid for when I shelled out the \$21.95, and not only because it's the professional thing to do—but because of scholarship. The brains behind such manuals are, after all, models of erudition, supreme authorities, experts in their fields; they exemplify our scholarly ambitions. They are, in effect, mapping out foreboding territory for us, territory which they have ostensibly explored and mastered. They are our mentors; we have a relationship with them built on mutual respect and unwavering trust. They have an obligation to check and recheck every word for spelling and every problem for accuracy. After all, what does scholarship mean?

If you have discovered errors in a test manual or on the test itself, or if you have any other comments, I would like to hear from you. My address is Suite 304, 700 Chilco Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6G 2R1, or you may phone me at 681-5461.