

Ashley MacIsaac's sex life – too much information?

"Calling all honourable Canadians...To be honoured, candidates must be Canadian citizens whose contribution to the life of the nation in 1996 is worthy of special recognition. A panel of editors seeks candidates from a wide variety of fields, famous or not, with only one exception: those engaged professionally in politics."

– Call for nominations for Maclean's 1996 Honor Roll

"Ashley MacIsaac was invited to be on Maclean's 1996 Honor Roll in recognition of his accomplishments in the field of entertainment. Last week's interview in New York was originally intended to assist in the preparation of a profile for our December 23 Honor Roll issue.

The issue was not and is not Ashley MacIsaac's sexual preference, which was known when he was invited to be on the Honor Roll. The issue is his lack of judgement in talking so openly and graphically about his sexual practices. Accordingly, the Board of Editors decided that it was inappropriate for him to be on an Honor Roll that tries to focus attention on singular Canadian achievements and role models."

– Statement by Maclean's Editor-in-chief, Robert Lewis

Apparently there is such a thing as being too candid. At least that's what *Maclean's* decided when it took Ashley MacIsaac off its 1996 Honor Roll because the young Cape Breton fiddler went into too much detail about his sex life during interviews with *Maclean's* and gay magazine *The Advocate*. *Maclean's* decided not to honour MacIsaac, because "he doesn't seem to recognize where candour ends and folly begins." If one of Canada's best national news magazines considers that being too honest outweighs the many other things MacIsaac has accomplished, I will have to look at their Honor Roll in new light this year. Or, if I'm to believe none of the people who do make the list have deep dark secrets of their own, maybe I should just get out my rose-coloured glasses.

According to *Maclean's* writer Patricia Hluchy, MacIsaac's "penchant for unconventional sex acts – and candour about it – clash resoundingly with his marketable image as a down-home, if outlandishly dressed, Canadian boy-hero" (November 25). Unconventional sex acts aside for a moment, any in-depth knowledge of a star will tend to clash with their marketable image. That's why interviews on late night talk shows are largely staged: the audience isn't supposed to know how Leno or Letterman would honestly react to things or what kind of answers their guests would give to the questions interviewers really want to ask. Instead, the blatant marketing that goes on during the interviews allows for only a shallow glimpse into the personality of the person in the guest chair. The fewer intimate details we know about a celebrity, the easier it is to believe that our idols are as talented and beautiful as they appear to be on television – and, in turn, the more imperfect the rest of us are. The more information a public personality discloses, the more people they are likely to offend. Issues as varied as drugs, marriage, religion, the freedom of Tibet, and vegetarianism have the potential to alienate a segment of a celebrity's fan base. Unless you've got invincible star-status like Tom Cruise or Madonna, the less off-the-cuff conversation the better.

MacIsaac may be a test case to gauge just how real the Canadian public wants its stars to be. His willingness to disclose the more intimate details of his life makes many of us uncomfortable, especially since those details reveal a deviance from social norms that is probably shocking. Will his talent prove more relevant to a majority of those people? *Maclean's* fears not. I hope that this time, they are wrong. I don't really want to know that Ashley MacIsaac has a urination fetish but, like many other people, I want information about people and society and I want that information to be truthful; I can hardly complain when I get what I asked for. Because I don't believe that a lie of omission is any less a lie, I have to admire MacIsaac's apparent belief that if people are going to like him they will have to like the person that he really is. Sexual preferences aren't necessarily relevant to a person's character, but in MacIsaac's case, the fact that he's chosen to be so open about his sex life is relevant in itself. Unfortunately, *Maclean's* looks down on that choice.

Hluchy comments disapprovingly that "the musician seems driven to put every aspect of his private life on display." Honesty is a rash and potentially costly indulgence for the twenty-one year old Caper who helped bring Celtic music into the mainstream, but I suspect many young people will identify with his desire for openess. People around MacIsaac's age have been taught to understand the costs of secrecy surrounding homosexuality as well as problems such as domestic and sexual abuse. Ever since elementary school, we've been advised to tell someone when we're upset or unsure about something. Telling brings therapeutic relief and the chance to find others in the same boat; it has also become a particularly profound act for gay people. MacIsaac may be risking a lot, but who can say he wouldn't be doing the same by keeping his secrets to himself for the sake of CD sales and his publicist's peace of mind?

Maclean's has exposed itself in a new way as well. Journalists are often criticized for shallow coverage, although this can be an understandable result of the limitations of print and television. In this case though, by refusing to celebrate MacIsaac's willingness to expose what many would consider his character flaws, the magazine has demonstrated an active interest in perpetuating the fantasy that truly respectable people are also perfect – in effect, an interest in being shallow. Still more surprising, though, is the fact that a group of journalists who have probably spent most of their careers battling to uncover the truth have turned their noses up at someone who is more than willing to provide it to them.

BLOOD & THUNDER
Letters to the Editor

Wondering where 'womyn' will end?

To the Editor:

Recently, I read an article in *The Brunswickan* regarding the controversial topic (to feminists) of how society should change the spelling of Woman to Womin or Womyn. For the most part, I thought the article was amusing concerning the extent to which feminists would like to change our vocabulary that has existed for as long as Men and Women have verbally communicated. This letter is not a challenge of what feminists stand for in their quest for liberation against men, but a suggestion that changing our course of language is not only a complicated task, but also a ridiculous one.

While I was reading the article, I could not help but notice that the author continually pointed out words that are referred to as derivatives of male spellings, which are inconsistent with how she suggests women should be addressed. Contemplating this theory brought me back to a class discussion that I had over the summer. The conversation provided an excellent example of why we should not change the spelling of words to please such a radical approach.

In the article, the words human, history and, more particularly, women are used to show examples of how words are centered around the male perspective. The suggestion that feminist groups are on the move to overcome oppression does seem sincere, but what seems to be overlooked are the foundations of these so-called words. If we change these words, we must go another step further and eliminate all words that offend women. For example, the term person has an attachment of "son," which relates to man as does the term "female," relating to male. If we accept changes of these terms or start to incorporate a new language, we must be prepared to change all offensive language in society. By this, I do not mean unwanted racial slurs. What should be considered are names such as the Washington Redskins, Atlanta Braves and Fighting Irish. Surely, we could not forget about the "manholes" that construction workers involve themselves with. If we do decide on changing these terms where will it end? Will we change french fry because it is offensive and equated with greasy food? And will society have to stop saying "white bread" and "brown bread"?

Changing the spelling of women to womyn will not focus attention on the oppression of women, but rather create a negative focus on the feminist approach. If the vision of the feminist movement is to liberate women and overcome the patriarchy of men, then for the author to even suggest a solution of changing the term History to Herstory is a complete contradiction of her stand. It would seem that reversing these words as she did in her article only presents itself with a form of male discrimination, and if a proper representation of gender equality is to achieved why not simplify the matter and call it Ourstory?

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas J. Burke

Great coverage, but where's *The Bruns Online*?

To the Editor:

Though I am not a UNB student, I still sometimes read The Brunswickan since some of the articles interest me and are better than the coverage elsewhere. A case in point is the Freeman Patterson write-up in the November 15 issue, relating to Patterson's upcoming presentation in Fredericton.

I just want to bring to your attention the lag in getting The Brunswickan on-line. The campus newspaper article says that a fuller account of the Patterson interview may be found at The Brunswickan website. I have checked the site twice and find that the item is still not there. The most recent on-line Brunswickan news is for November 8.

I would guess that the articles which appear in the Nov 15 issue would have been written a day or two at least prior to when the print edition hit the street. Is there any way that your website can be made more current in terms of its Brunswickan content?

Thanks again!
Don J J Carroll
President, Photo Fredericton

Editor's Note: The interview with Freeman Patterson is now available on our website at http://www.unb.ca/web/bruns. *Our apologies for the delay.* The Bruns Online *is produced by a student volunteer, presently doing double-duty as our News Editor. Complete issues of the Bruns are regularly available on our searchable website and issues 10, 11 and 12 of* The Brunswickan *will be put online as soon as time permits!*

Lockerby, Earle

To the Editor:

Just a note to say thanks to Pat FitzPatrick for the excellent article (page 10, November 15 issue) on New Brunswick's famous photographer, Freeman Patterson.

At the end of the article there is a note that one can get the full interview with Freeman by linking up to your web site. I can't seem to find this article, can you point me in the right direction. Most articles I have found as Nov. 8 or prior.

Stop student loan deduction on part-time earnings

The following is an open letter to the Honorable Roly MacIntyre, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour with the Provincial government.

Dear Honorable Minister,

Students at the University of New Brunswick are disturbed with the fact that your government is advocating an 80% contribution of their part-time earnings toward their student loan after earning $600.

By doing this, your department is giving students a disincentive to work. Why would a student want to work while obtaining their education, if they were only able to earn $17.56 at a rate of $5.50/hour working twenty hours a week? It doesn't make sense. These students who are working are simply trying to make a little extra money to go on class excursions or even an extra trip home.

The statistic that was reported on CBC Radio by one of your officials that "only" 14% of students even have part-time jobs, is questionable. Have you considered the possibility that this legislation is encouraging students to work in the underground economy in order to avoid this 80% tax on learning?

UNB students understand that there is significant cost associated with the maintenance of our provincial student loans program. Therefore, we feel that returning the part-time contribution back to its original state of a 40% contribution after $1600 has been earned by the student is realistic and should be considered by the department.

The cost to taxpayers to maintain the high level of education that students in New Brunswick enjoy is great. But the cost that society must endure when a student does not enroll in a institution of higher learning is even greater. Students are asking you to reconsider this current legislation.

Anthony Knight
UNB SU Vice-President
(External Affairs)

Mudwump

Joseph W.J. FitzPatrick$_3$

Peacock: quick to comment, slow to think

To Rick Peacock, Director, UNB Traffic and Security:

Mr. Peacock, I'm surprised at you.

You have, on several occasions impuned the character of students who complain about the parking situation on campus.

There are plenty of spaces, you say, just not many close to the door.

Funny though, that the ones that are closer to the door are Faculty and Staff parking spaces but I've never heard you criticize Faculty. Of course, I realize that they don't complain as much.

Do you not find it odd, sir, that Faculty members who may be making in excess of $100,000 from UNB pay the same $55 parking fee as a student who is paying in excess of $5,000 to UNB. Clearly, the Faculty member is better equipped to pay a parking fee and, considering that Faculty spaces are not only closer to the door, but, proportionately, are in greater abundance (1 space per 3.27 students, 2.2 spaces per faculty/staff), I am left to wonder why the fee for a Faculty member is the same as a Student.

The argument that Faculty use the spaces more often is, in fact, less powerful than others may argue. Since most Faculty need teach only 9 hours per week compared to the student with 15 hours of class time.

By stating that there are many spaces available, you are, in fact, accusing those who complain of being too lazy to park at the Aitken Centre or behind the Lady Beaverbrook Rink.

Why would a Faculty member not be willing to pay more for their better parking spaces? Even though I'm sure our young, virile student bodies are much more suited to the trekking required by parking at the Aitken Centre than the aging population of faculty and staff at UNB, which includes the senior administration and their support staff, I would gladly pay $1,000 to park next to my place of work, if I were being paid a starting salary of $34,000, increasing to over $100,000 by the time I chose to retire with a pension which gives me a better take home pay (because of the lower tax bracket and no Faculty Union dues) than when I was working.

Mr. Peacock, you were quick to point out that parking on campus costs the University a lot of money. Students shouldn't complain about the $55 fee, you said, because "(it) barely covers the paper work" (The Brunswickan, October 25 "Parking on campus still upsets students," page 3.)

How clearly you have forgotten that the revenue you admitted to generating last year was more than five times the total cost of your "non-salary budget."

You have 25 FTE salaried positions in your department, for a estimated cost of $793,000. In addition, you have a "non-salary budget" of $33,800, which hardly compares to the more than $218,000 anticipated in fees and fines this year. In addition, I doubt that your entire non-salary budget is "paper work."

I should not have to point out to you that $101,940 of your budget comes from STU, Incutech and the Provincial Archives for the services you provide to them. Need I point out that some $182,217 is charged to the Residence System and residence fees. This means that the total cost of Security and Traffic is $550,100, of which approximately $183,367 comes from undergraduate tuition, or $26 for each student.

As such, even attempting to relate parking fees to the cost of Security and Traffic involves slight of hand. You know as well as I that revenues from parking fees and parking tickets ($218,000) are counted as "General Revenue" at UNB, not as revenue for Security and Traffic. Your departmental budget does not increase if you give out more tickets or sell more passes.

In the same article to which you referred to the cost of "paper work," you said students should remember that paving and lighting and clearing the snow were expenses incurred by the University for parking.

I ask you, sir, how you can so bluntly attempt to deceive the students? You know, as well as I do, that UNB does not set the parking fees in an attempt to recoup the cost of paving, lighting or snow removal or even to cover the cost of Security and Traffic. Moreover, the University does not even list the cost of providing parking or itemize the expenses you claim are incurred.

And, more to the point, which parking lots have been paved, and how recently? And well are these places lit? Compare the lighting of the unpaved student lots behind Head Hall, Lady Beaverbrook Rink, above and to the right of the SUB and Chapman field to the faculty lots around Singer-Tilley-Carleton and the Harriet Irving Library have been patched this past summer. Isn't it convenient that the easiest spaces to light, and the better paved are close to buildings and those spaces are for faculty?

In your defense, Mr. Peacock, I realize that your department has been cut shamelessly in the past two decades. You have seen your workforce reduced by 40%. You have lost 15 FTEs since 1976, when UNB made Traffic and Security part of the "zero base budgeting" which it applies to most expenses of the University.

I suggest, sir, that you attempt to add credence to you plans to expand Traffic and Security by being open about your expenses and revenues and your plans, rather than belittle the persistent complaints about parking on campus with subterfuge.

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This issue is dedicated to:
Michael Shanks. He made a difference.

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The opinions contained in this newspaper are those of the individual writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Brunswickan*.

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All copy submitted must be double spaced, on ONE side of the page only and must be legible. If we can't read it, we won't print it. Duh. *The Brunswickan* accepts copy on 3.5 inch disk, either Macintosh or MS–DOS format. Articles printed in *The Brunswickan* may be freely reprinted provided proper credit is given. 'Cause nobody likes a plaigarist.

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