

OPINION & EDITORIAL

Editorial

A little compassion, please?

by Cindy Brown
Editor-in-Chief

Flashing lights. Sirens. Why are people so interested in knowing where a police car or fire truck is going? What kind of society do we live in if people are more interested in seeing destruction: a car accident, a burning building, than watching the news?

I was driving to the mall the other day. I could see the flashing lights of two police cars up ahead at the intersection. Traffic was moving slow because someone had slammed another's car in the intersection and the police and firepeople were trying to clean up the mess. People were craning their necks just to see what had happened. I can imagine how I would feel if I was the person in that accident and I saw people fighting to get a good look at me. I would feel embarrassed and a little hurt - a little like a caged animal.

You see it all the time - if there is a car accident or burning building, people rush to get a good look and then they stay and continue watching - as if something amazing is going to happen. It's not amazing - but there is a pretty good possibility someone is suffering.

So, why is it so important for people to see

other people suffer? Perhaps they find it interesting that someone is lying in the street, covered in blood. Perhaps they are glad they are not in that situation. Perhaps it is just because we are nosy. Maybe it is just because we don't have to deal with death everyday - people aren't dying in the street. The town of Fredericton is quite small, yet in the not so recent past, a group beat up a young man, just because of his sexual orientation. I find it hard to believe that there wasn't someone around who could have offered assistance. But it happens all the time, especially in big cities - someone could be lying in the street, bleeding and people will walk by with their noses in the air, ignoring them. Then there is that other awful side - those people who *have* to watch accidents or burning houses.

It seems quite insensitive to me that people find such an interest in pain, death and violence - but only as observers.

People seem to contradict themselves as well. Those who get whiplash from trying to get a good look at a car in a ditch on the side of the road, would not think to stop and see if that person needed a hand - or to help a bleeding person on the side of the street.

When did we lose our compassion for mankind? Did we even ever have it?

Just a thought...

by Joanne Barr

All over campus and around the city at this time of year poppies are evident. They can be seen on the coats, jackets, dresses and hats of people of all ages. The poppy is the symbol which we wear to remind us of those who were killed in the wars and peacekeeping operations in which Canada has been involved. The poppy has been associated with those who have been killed in war for years. In fact, it existed as such for at least 110 years prior to being adopted by Canada.

According to information provided by the Canadian Legion, a writer first made the connection between the poppy and the battlefield deaths during the Napoleonic wars of the early 19th century. This individual was to have remarked the fields that were barren before battle, exploded with the blood-red flowers after the fighting ended. Prior to the First World War, few poppies grew in Flanders. During the bombardments of that war the chalk soils became rich in lime from rubble, allowing "popover rheas" to thrive. When the war ended, the lime was quickly absorbed, and the poppy began to disappear again. Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, a Canadian doctor and writer of the poem, *In Flanders Fields*, made the same connection 100 years later, during the First World War. The scarlet poppy became the symbol for soldiers who died in battle.

The poppy was officially adopted by the

Great War Veterans Association in 1921, on the suggestion of a Mrs. E. Guerin, a French citizen. And, in November of that year, the first poppies were distributed in Canada.

When we wear the poppy, we remember the war dead, and we also help the living and the dependents of those who served in the war. The poppy, even today, remains the Flower of Remembrance, a powerful symbol, not only of freedom, but also of the great cost of war.

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up your quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

• John McCrae

Mugwump

A call for safer bathrooms

by Patryk Reid
Managing Editor

The public washroom. In a world where we spend our days farther from home than ever, and in which it is seen as unacceptable to relieve one's self in outdoor public spaces, it has become an institution having immeasurable value to the masses. Indeed, the University of New Brunswick's public washrooms are a testament to the truth of this. Yet, the benefits we derive from them are, to some extent, offset by the dangers inherent in the reality they facilitate.

(Those who know me may now think this is just another example of my spreading "poo-poo humour." I assure you, the reader, this essay was written out of the genuine concern of myself, as well as *The Brunswickan* editorial board, for the need to bring this

topic into civic discourse. It should also be noted that I am not a germophobe. I am, rather, an observant, realistic bathroom activist.)

The public washroom is a place where one regularly, though involuntarily, comes into physical contact with various air-, and surface-borne residues of other peoples' bodies. That verity alone should illuminate the increased potential for the spread of pathological organisms in such places. And whereas this is an obvious fact to most, it seems that progress in the architectural philosophy of public washrooms is lacking in revision or application, given the visibility of the condition.

Certain, simple changes ought to be made to the typical public washroom to increase health safety, user comfort, and cut long-term costs. Toilet flushes, taps, and soap dispensers should operate by sensors. Stall and bathroom doors should swing outwards,

so that you don't have to touch them as you leave. Toilet paper should be at least two-ply—it's not like using one-ply actually gets people to use less. And meanwhile, ventilation could sure as hell be improved. While we're at it, we might as well have a device in there which would sound an alarm every time one of those sickos waltz out of the bathroom without washing their hands.

But let's face it. This won't happen for awhile. So for the time being, have paper towel in your hand when touching anything after you've washed your hands, breath as little as possible, and stay away from those "pee-pee-hands" types.

It should be the mandate of UNB to implement like changes. Such innovation would put the institution at the forefront of university student relations. So petition the UNB administration, and call your MP. Your health depends on it.

Remembrance

by Murray V. Heckbert

As the poppies and veterans bid us remember sacrifice in years past, we are once again embroiled in conflict. We have learned but little. For all the technology that was to have made war easy and neat, we remain a frightened child blindly returning the punch of a schoolyard bully. We have more information than ever but no clarity. We still mask our ignorance in the veil of what must now be done so that it never need be done again.

September 11 was a great tragedy for America, and for freedom-loving people around the world. Those responsible must be brought to justice. Yet consider this November 11 whether we are treading the right path. This is a war about Islam. Freedom-loving people are not restricted to Western democracies. The vast majority of Muslims are moderates who love peace as we do. "No man is a true believer," the Quran states, "unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself." Yet our media tells us little of these untold millions who would rally to our cause if only we gave them reason to. Instead, we meekly accept that it is us versus them. Why do they hate us, puzzled commentators ask? Perhaps, more appropriately, we need to ask, why should they like us?

You are responsible for what your

culture does in your name. Since the Second World War, your culture has promoted a cycle of poverty and misery throughout the Third World. Your culture has supported Third World governments whose degeneracy you cannot imagine. It has promoted the existence and arming of the state of Israel in direct opposition to the wishes of the people of Palestine. It has turned a blind eye as Israel ignores UN resolutions demanding an end to its occupation of Palestinian lands. It has trafficked in armaments which contribute to the destabilization of the Middle East. Weapons designed and produced in western factories kill Palestinians everyday. Over the last decade thousands of Iraqis

world's most vibrant communities. Muslims do care. They chafe at our arrogance every day in believing that we alone know what is right for the world. Afghanistan is feeling our arrogance now. Millions face starvation because we would rather bomb than feed. Innocents die because we would rather kill than pursue by law. And in the Muslim world, with each falling bomb, more people get a grand view of how greatly we care about Islam. More people die. More people hate.

Osama bin Laden is not Islam's avenging angel. His twisted version of Islam has few real followers yet he attracts sympathy because our tactless policies make his resistance to them an object of

Defeat terror by creating tolerance. Do not deal in stereotypes. Realize there is a world beyond CNN. Read about Islam. Make a Muslim friend. Share your Muslim perspective with a non Muslim. Debate. Think. Refuse to accept there is no solution. Remove the seedbed of terror.

admiration. Economic disparity in the Third World creates the discontent in which his message of jihad grows. Frustrated, the downtrodden and alienated are easily duped by extremists. If you enjoy feeling safe and secure, do not fool yourself. Poverty and helplessness breed

despair. Despair ignored breeds rage. Among men of skill and action, rage can wreak terrible vengeance.

When it's over over there, it will not be over here. We will not have addressed the divide between the First World and the Third one jot. Our culture will continue to wonder why horrible acts are visited upon it for no apparent reason. We will not prevent future terrorist acts by indiscriminate military force, nor will we prevent them through increased security. Our vigilance will wane and terrorists will again strike. If individuals are determined, they can be prevented from terrorism only with extreme difficulty. Remember the World Trade Center. There is no sanctuary. Terrorism is now global. Death abroad will beget death at home. We may one day look back on September 11 as a fond memory. Nuclear and biological terrorism are real threats. An entire city could be wiped out because of our pretensions to self-righteousness.

In cultural understanding alone will we find an answer. The dialogue of moderates is the death knell of extremism. The Irish peace process proves it. You must bridge the divide between the Islamic world and the West. Armies and technology cannot defend you from terror. Understanding can. How much better to create dialogue with Muslims and root out terror together? How much better our security? How much better to see people like bin Laden truly marginalized rather than quietly admired? A pipe dream, perhaps. There is no goodwill to reach a solution, some lament. Create some. You may believe you have no responsibility for the past. The future unfolds, I assure you, because of what you do in the present. Create goodwill. Break boundaries.

Defeat terror by creating tolerance. Do not deal in stereotypes. Realize there is a world beyond CNN. Read about Islam. Make a Muslim friend. Share your Muslim perspective with a non Muslim. Debate. Think. Refuse to accept there is no solution. Remove the seedbed of terror.

Thinking people grieve at the loss of innocent life whenever it occurs. We should now. To repeat our mistakes will bring us only more grief. And the innocents of New York and Washington, of Afghanistan and Palestine, will truly have died to no purpose.

Lest we forget. Peace be unto you.

Want to write a Letter to the Editor? Check out page 5 for details on writing letters and columns for The Brunswickan.

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