

Abolishing the Monarchy, part II

by A Son of Liberty

It would seem that old Betty Windsor and her ilk are not without supporters in our neck of the woods after all. It was with interest and delight that I read Mr. Bryan Cheron's and Mr. Neill McKay's replies to my previous letter supporting the abolition of the monarchy. Naturally, it is the prerogative of these gentlemen to oppose this idea; each of us is entitled to his or her own opinion. The difference is that my opinion is right and theirs is wrong. Here's why...

In his attempted rebuttal, Mr. Cheron states that it is not only the Queen's birthright that entitles her to rule our country, but also the Constitution Act (actually called the British North America Act, 1867). My question to him, then, is this: under this Act, who selects the Queen? Did I choose her? I did not. Did our Premiers, our House of Commons, our Prime Minister, vote for her? I'm pretty sure that they didn't either. Did God, then? Someone seems to think so: the words around the Queen's portrait on the backs of every Canadian coin read "Elizabeth II, D.G. ('Dei Gratia') Regina," or 'Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God Queen.' I tell you what: if God comes down College Hill tomorrow and says, "Lay off the Queen, she has been anointed by Me to rule over all of you," then that will be that. If, though, as I suspect, God decides to stay in Heaven that day, I will argue that God did not pick the Queen either and, therefore, the BNA Act merely codifies and enforces an unfair *status quo* on us all.

Mr. Cheron also says that establishing a presidential republic (something I did not, I might add, propose in my original letter; there are many forms of republics and not all of them have a president) would be equally as expensive as our present system, and Mr. McKay says it would be even more expensive, after startup costs. Sorry to burst your bubbles gentlemen, but in reality, a presidential republic would be exactly half as expensive. Under our current system of government, the roles of head of state and head of government are separated. That means there are two official residences, two offices, and two staffs which need to be maintained and paid for. In a presidential republic, the two jobs are combined in a single individual, the President, with one residence, one office, and one staff. All this, and it's a steal at half the price!

Mr. Cheron's next argument is that not every American child can grow up to be President. He claims the President must be "a rich, Caucasian male of at least middle age." Now in his defense, the US Constitution does in fact state the President must be at least 35 years old. That said, I defy him to find any part of American law that confirms the rest of his claims. Mr. Cheron also gets it right that this

exclusion of non-rich-old-white-men from the Presidency is not actually written law, but he then says "it is in the spirit of the law." The thing is, in the monarchist alternative he is trying to defend, the exclusion of everyone, except members of one British family from the monarch is written law, under the very Constitution Act he supports in his article. I, therefore, find this argument circular and foolish. Mr. McKay also takes up this point, and adds that a citizen of a republic has only a small chance of ever being elected President. To him I would point out the vast difference between a slim chance and no chance at all, as happens in a monarch (unless you happen to be born into that certain British family). It is also true, as Mr. McKay mentions, that elections did give Americans Presidents like Bill Clinton and Richard Nixon. He forgets to mention though, that elections also gave them inspired, visionary leaders like Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy; men who believed in freedom and the triumph of the human will, inspired hope in their fellow citizens, and took their nation to the stars. Is there a Union Jack or a Maple Leaf on the moon? Not the last time I checked. The point, my friends is that while not always perfect, a democratic system provides an opportunity for advancement through merit rather than through a random accident of birth, as is the case in a monarchy.

Mr. McKay takes a moment in his reply to explain the system of granting Royal Assent to bills guards against abuses of power and that Royal Assent has not been withheld from any bill passed in my lifetime. The latter statement is true; the former is false. I tell you now that this system of Royal Assent, *promotes*, it *encourages*, it enshrines abuses of power in that, should they be so included, our Queen or her representatives could refuse Assent to any bill they wanted and be accountable to no one. The point is not that they have not done this for years – the point is they both have and could again. Is this fair? You be the judge.

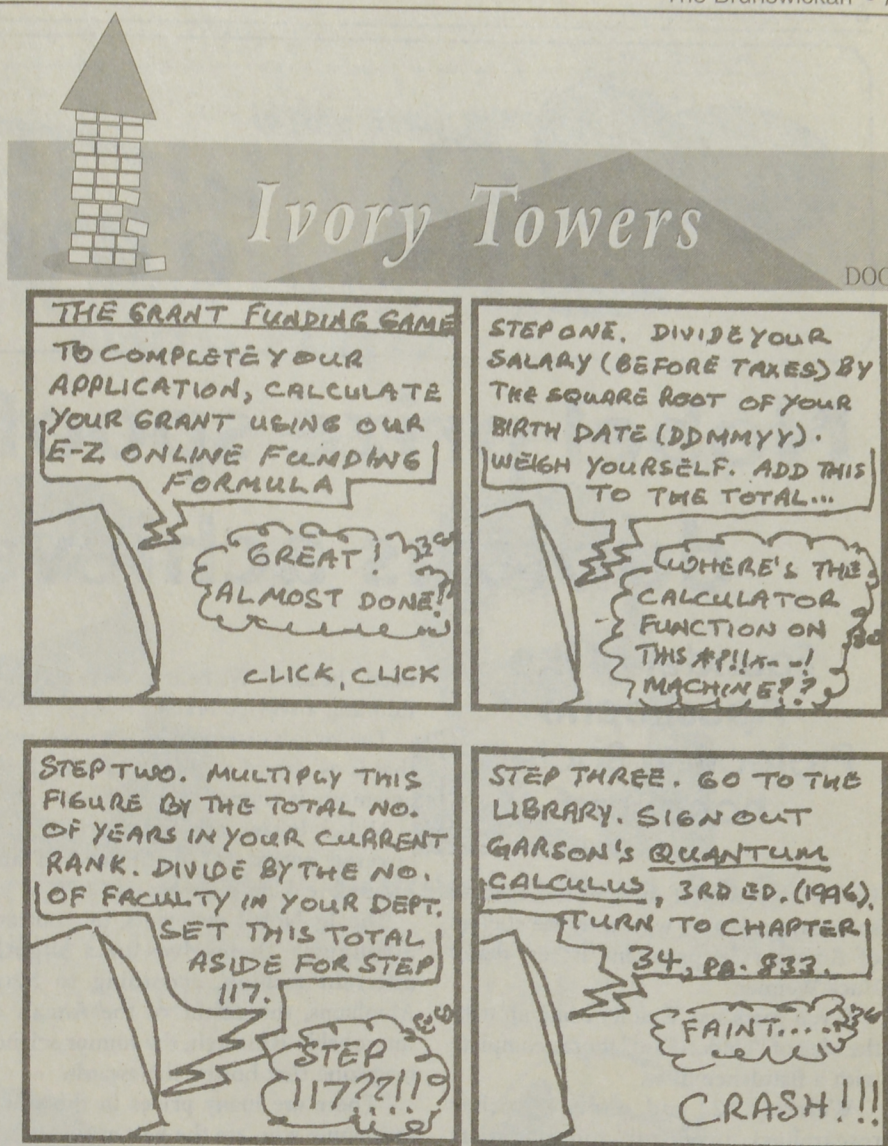
In his final swing at defending the concept of monarchy, Mr. Cheron states that the Queen is a Canadian citizen. I will concede this point, however, he goes on to say the Queen "is more democratic than a President of Canada ever could be." This statement is patently absurd. The dictionary defines democracy as "government by the people or their elected representatives." The Queen was not elected by anyone. In a monarchy, the people are not even entrusted with the power of choice. And so once again, Mr. Cheron displays his ignorance of the very idea he is trying to defend. I believe what he meant to say is that the Queen is more *representative* than an elected leader could be. Mr. McKay would seem to agree with this view as well. I on the other hand, would take issue with this claim; the

Queen certainly does not represent my point of view!

Mr. McKay claims that I "equate ceremony with uselessness," and suspects that I will feel differently upon my Convocation. As a matter of fact sir, I already have a degree from UNB, and did not attend Convocation, as I considered it to be a titanic waste of money and effort – much like the monarch actually. That is, however, not the point. I do not have a problem with tradition. I do have a problem with bad traditions. As I said in my initial letter, just because something is traditional does not necessarily mean that it is right. And the monarchy, though traditional, is wrong.

Finally, I would like to respond to Mr. McKay's accusation that I am "too weak in my own convictions to stand behind them and public my name." My reasons for withholding my identity are my own. Honestly though, I don't think that who I am matters as much as what I have to say. And, Mr. McKay, if you are going to base your opinion of my argument on my identity rather than its merits, then frankly, it's not much of an opinion at all.

Although I applaud Mr. Cheron's and Mr. McKay's efforts in trying to alter my point of view, my commitment to my basic argument remains steadfast. Monarchy is wrong my friends, and for that reason it must be abolished. In its place, I propose establishing a system of government of the people, by the people, and for the people." I propose the Republic of Canada.



SU Roundup

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to reinvest the money they save as a result of the introduction of the Foundation's bursaries.

There is a problem, however, and that is that no one has any control of how the money is spent. In Nova Scotia the funds saved were not reinvested into helping students but went into tax cuts instead. In New Brunswick, we are still waiting for a clearer picture of where the money has been spent.

At a meeting with Norman Riddell, the Executive Director of the Foundation, a new initiative was announced for a \$1 million research program to answer some of the questions concerning accessibility. How does the bursary affect the student? How does it affect tuition?

The idea is to look at what factors are involved that influence an individual to consider a post-secondary education as an option. This information is valuable as so many of these questions come into play when speaking with the government on issues of accessibility to education. One often forgets the psychological barrier of entering into a degree program with the prospect of a \$30,000

loan weighing on your shoulders when you are finished.

This past summer the Foundation also announced the creation of the first private sector donation to the fund; the World Petroleum Congress scholarships are designated for students in earth science, petroleum engineering and international business. As Millennium scholarships are not based on the discipline one is studying, this new scholarship was seen to be against the original mandate, however, as there are no public funds used to administer these specific scholarships, it means that more money gets to needy students. The real fight is that private sector donations also come from businesses which support the social sciences and not simply applied sciences.

I devoted this column to the topic of Millennium Scholarships because I feel we should applaud efforts that deal with the current student financial aid situation, however, this is a backend solution – we are giving money to students who have maxed-out their student loans. We need to think front-end if we are going to continue questioning accessibility to post-secondary education.

Reflections on SU elections

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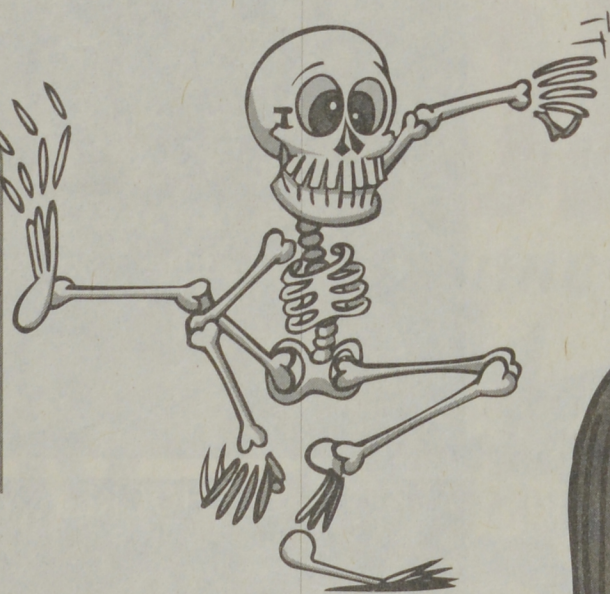
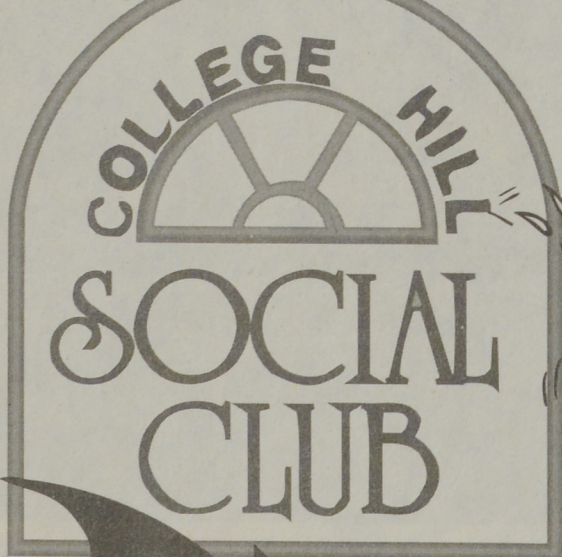
me, I had a friend who was always trying to get me involved. To make a long story short, he was able to motivate me.

Once I started working within the system, everything seemed different. Elections took on a level of importance to me and I wanted to know who was speaking on my behalf, and what was on their agenda for the year.

I don't expect every student to run for a position on council or give up what little free time they have left. What I mean to say is, start small and see what happens. You may want to begin by taking in a hockey game and watching UNB destroy St Thomas. Or maybe join one of the 80 or more clubs and societies on campus. Whatever puts the wind in your sails, go for it.

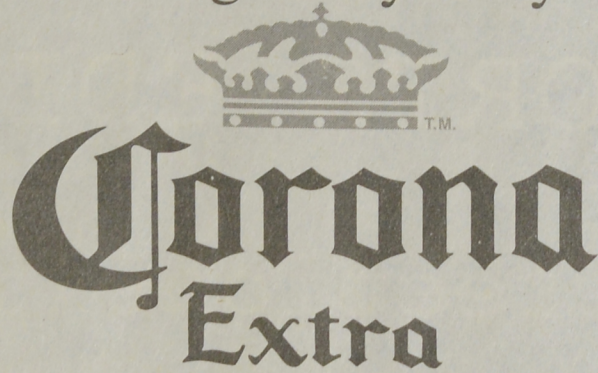
I'm willing to bet that if a student gets involved, even if it is something small, they will start to feel a sense of ownership of and pride in our campus. Then when they see a polling station, they'll stop and ask a couple questions...and yes, maybe even vote.

HALLOWEEN WED OCT 31



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