

OPINION & EDITORIAL

Editorial

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

Most of you may know this passage from high school English class when you had to plod through Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. No, I do not mean the Romeo and Juliet where Leonardo DiCaprio played Romeo, I am talking about the real deal, where you actually had to read the play in its entirety.

Most of the students around campus would probably appreciate a passage such as this. Unfortunately, most students in high school (and I say most) are not happy to read this amazing work by a famous writer. I know this because I have been there. At least half of the class grumbled about the reading. I know I grumbled. It's a hard reading, as most of Shakespeare work is, but once I was halfway finished, I began to appreciate it, to understand it. I am glad to have read it and since then, I have read more.

How many people shared my sentiment? I don't really know. I hope most people did.

The problem with the way our children are raised is that TV is the norm. I know that in elementary and high school, if you didn't have cable, you were usually classified as 'poor' by the other children. Children are harsh sometimes. I know that I felt pressured to fit in. Cable was one of the criteria you needed to fit in. So, after school, my friends and I often went home and sat in front of the television to have a snack. After supper, more TV.

I wish I would have listened to my mother when she told me to go outside and play, instead of watching my favorite show. I didn't listen, and I can't change that now. Unfortunately.

I think that because of TV, our literature is suffering. Children often don't want to read books anymore because the television is so much more entertaining and engaging. Before TV, there was nothing else to do, but read and go outside and live. Before TV, men like William Shakespeare wrote millions upon millions of words. Now, we have awards for our favorite movie and TV personalities.

I guess what I am saying is that if we don't tear our children away from the television set and make them broaden their horizons, then maybe we will never have another writer that will stand the test of time as Shakespeare has.

I am not saying that everyone is a TV zombie, but watching the television is an important part of many people's day. Whether it is for the news, the weather or a sitcom, I bet the majority of people in Canada spend a considerable amount of time in front of the television.

I myself won't stop watching television. It is entertaining, informative, and relaxing but I do read a lot more than I used to. In our lives we don't have the capacity to read everything there is, but we can certainly read more if we spend less time in front of the television.

• Cindy Brown
Acting Editor-in-Chief

Mugwump: free gift?

"Have you received your free gift yet?" asked the woman behind the table.

"Free gift," I thought, intrigued. "Now what, exactly, could she mean by that?" I wondered. So I asked her, saying something to the effect of "What do you mean?"

The woman explained that I could pick out and keep one of a variety of items that she had laid out on her table. These included whistles, keychains, and flashlights. But there was a catch. Before I could pick one of them, I had to sign up for a credit card. The woman's actual wording (her pitch), was different, more along the lines of: "If you sign up for our credit card you can have your choice of any one of these free gifts."

It became clear to me that she had not understood my question, and I figured that, based on her answer, she would not upon further clarification. I was not inquiring as to what was involved in receiving the item. I simply wanted to know what a "free gift" is. I have encountered the term before. I have seen it used as a gimmick for selling a wide range of things, from magazines to insurance coverage. Yet it has never been defined for me.

As such I find the concept of a free gift quite confusing. In my experience, a gift is something which one person or group gives another person or group to celebrate their relationship, or some aspect of the recipient's experience. A real "gift" is given out of the free will, and often at some sort of sacrifice by, the giver. I think that this is a generally accepted understanding of the term. It is inherent to this definition that a gift is free.

However, if one were to define "gift" in terms of the implications of the "free gift" offered in the sales pitch described above, then a gift is something that a person gets by giving money to another party. In other words, that person is paying for the item. It isn't a gift at all. In fact, it's a purchase. And in the case of my experience, I would have been paying for the gift again and again and again.

Still, the prospect of a free gift is enough to grab the attention of many people. Most of us are excited by the possibility of getting *stuff* without having to pay for it, regardless of whether or not we need it or what it comes with. And we know that the gimmick works, as companies continue to use it. Yet we also know that no company would provide any service at a financial loss to itself. So why do we continue to be sucked in by them?

• Patryk Reid
Acting Managing Editor

SU Roundup

Standing outside the doors of the SUB yesterday, I was told it was impossible to make a column interesting when the subject is the Canadian Alliance of Student Association's (CASA) lobby conference which took place last week.

I admit the subject of the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST) is a fairly dry one, however, it does hold great significance to us as students. The money to the provinces is intended to go towards healthcare, post secondary education (PSE) and other social programs. It comes as a lump sum from the federal government to the provinces to spend essentially as they please. Healthcare, a social and close-to-home issue, gets approximately 66% of these funds, thus core funding to PSE gets hit.

CASA spent all last week on Parliament Hill working to spread the message of the importance of PSE in Canada. CHST payments was one of the biggest topics they pushed in the one-on-one meetings with back-bencher MPs and in the larger group meetings with various ministers throughout the conference.

The policy alternative suggested by CASA is to earmark funding for PSE through the CHST. This is where the problem starts. The federal government states it is unconstitutional to tell the provinces where to direct the funding - post-secondary education is a provincial jurisdiction.

CASA is still fighting them on the issue of earmarking PSE funding. They believe that since the federal government initially set the rules and initiated the transfer they can in fact create envelope funding within the transfer. Envelope funding would simply ensure that the money meant for PSE would actually make it there.

This leads to a question that was put on the table by Paul Martin, Minister of Finance, in one of the large group meetings. He asked us if we felt federal funding should go into one large pot (i.e. CHST), or if we should pick one thing the federal government should focus on.

Minister Martin expressed a genuine interest in PSE and, more importantly, in working towards positive solutions. The possibility here is for the federal government to focus on the issue of accessibility of Canadians to PSE and then to leave issues such as infrastructure to the provinces.

Accessibility was a major theme throughout the week. The idea behind this is the frontend barriers that prevent people from entering university in the first place and then backend barriers, such as student loan debt, on the way out.

CASA met with the director of the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation and the head of Human Resources Canada to discuss the Canadian Student Loan Program. The policy alternatives discussed focused around decreasing the interest rates on student loans and introducing the concept of an income-contingent loan remission program. In my attempt to keep the reader interested, I won't delve any further into tax initiatives and default rates.

As for the larger picture, CASA had a successful week on Parliament Hill. We received a positive response from those with whom we spoke and at numerous occasions were told CASA was considered to be one of the most respected PSE lobby coalitions in Canada.

I am not saying CASA does not have a great deal to learn and a big fight ahead of them. At the end of the week in Ottawa, a new National Director was elected whom I feel will take us forward in the year to come.

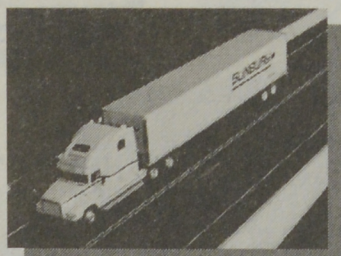
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Note from the editor:
Due to space restrictions, some letters had to be left out but they will be printed next week. Only two issues left - get your letters to the editor in soon.

Are you Graduating
and feel that you have contributed to
student life ?

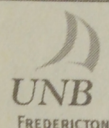
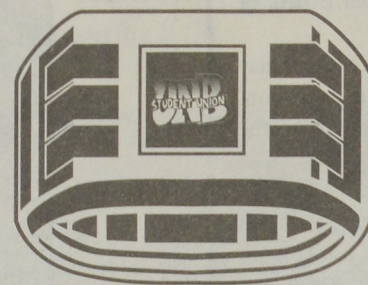
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126 in the SUB.

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The Information Technology Professional Program

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Thursday, March 29th, 7:00 pm

Eaton Multimedia Centre

Marshall d Avray Hall, Room 235

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