

THE BRUNSWICKAN OPINION & EDITORIAL

Editorial

Keep your mayo hidden

by Sean Patrick Sullivan
Editor-in-Chief

This is getting ridiculous.

When the US upgraded its warning status to "Code Orange" this past week, some Americans began to panic.

Not really knowing who or what they should be worried about, millions of Americans are rushing to heed the latest advice of the Homeland Security Department: stock up on duct tape and plastic sheeting.

As reported in yesterday's *Globe and Mail*, hardware stores have had to go on high alert to keep up with the demand.

These people, of course, believe that sealing up windows will keep chemical agents out. Apparently, they haven't thought of where their air comes from

(i.e. outside) and where they'll eventually have to go (outside).

More infuriating are recent suggestions from New York officials on how to spot terrorists, including watching for men with nicks on their faces; surely the sign of an Islamic terrorist who has shaved his beard to blend in.

My face usually looks like I tried to shave with sand paper when I'm done. I'm going to avoid the Big Apple for a while.

As well, while in New York, be wary of anyone carrying jars of mayonnaise into the subway - they may be holding chemical or biological agents.

Or maybe it's, you know, mayonnaise? The US administration has to stop instilling such absurd fears into the public, but I'm afraid it will only get worse.

Mugwump

Ethics vs. Money

by Ben Conoley
Managing Editor

It's funny you know, trying to keep a business afloat while at the same time doing your best to hold high your ideals. *The Brunswickan* is a business, and as a business, we're often forced to put aside our ideals in favor of printing the paper you're holding right now.

There's a smoking ad in this paper somewhere. Like most, it probably has a guy or girl doing some kind of crazy athletic feat, and underneath it will say "Death Stix," or something. I've trying to figure this one out, and I still can't see how a pack of cigarettes is going to make me finish a decathlon in record time. How is that supposed to convince anyone to start smoking? It really sucks, because every week when I'm placing the ads and I see that one, I bite my lip and make some room. We hate that we promote smoking, so just to clear things up: Don't smoke, even though ads claim it'll make you a better cyclist.

After reading *Fast Food Nation* this summer, I decided that fast food, does indeed suck, and I never wanted to eat it again. I made it a few weeks, then I caved. But nevertheless, I'm trying to cut back, or so should the majority of students who eat crap. So when we run an ad by some huge hamburger corporation, I get uncomfortable because again, we're promoting an unhealthy lifestyle. So here's the deal, if you absolutely need to eat fast food, then get the veggie burger,

salad, not fries, and maybe some orange juice instead of cola.

Lately we've also been running some ads about joining the military. I think there's one in here somewhere this week. If you've ever read our op-ed section before today, you may have noticed that we're not really onside with this whole war we can't escape. I swear that even *Archie* comics are pro-war these days. So here's the deal, I would never want to join the army, if you do, that's cool-but this war is a really bad idea.

And bars, oh the bars. These people pretty much keep us in business. I can count on three fingers the bars in this town that I actually like going to. Alcoholism is a huge problem in all areas of society, and sometimes it feels weird to have such a large part of our advertisements made up of beer/bar ads. So drink responsibly, even if it is 80s night. Don't drink and drive, and if you're drooling all over yourself and can't talk right, chances are that guy/girl isn't interested in you, so back off. Oh yeah, you can't dance either.

So there you have it, sort of. There's a whole lot of ads in this paper, more than we'd like to have. But we're a poor paper. We don't like to endorse smoking, drinking, the military, fast food outlets, or other such things, but we don't have a whole lot of choice, except again, to lock the doors and stop the press. The day we can turn down an advertisement for the reasons stated above will be a wonderful day. However, I don't think I'll ever see it come.

Because everything is political

Make love, not war

by Tan-Nee Ng

Is it just me, or are all the articles bashing and defending Frederickton activists getting really lame? Some people might consider me an "activist" because some of my friends like to organize rallies and raise public awareness about issues that really matter to them.

After all, we all know the saying, "Birds of a feather flock together..." But come on, that's a silly saying! If I hang around with a pack of boys, does that mean I'm a boy too? No! So some people may think of me as an "activist" because I went to Quebec City to protest the FTAA...but, my mom and dad went too ...and nobody's calling them "activists!" Others might conclude then that I'm an "activist" because I listen to Propagandi, read Noam Chomsky, and write stupid articles like this one for my student newspaper, or do weekly radio broadcasts on CHSR about women's issues. Sure, I do a lot of this kinda stuff, and sometimes I even go to demos. But I also love cooking, making clothes, learning to play various instruments, singing in the shower, and working on my personal website. Do those things make me an activist? I mean, doesn't cooking, sewing, and singing involve actions? Don't you have to be active to be able to do any of that stuff?

So what is up with this classification of "activist?" Who is an activist and based on what criteria? What is an activist anyway? One might suggest that an activist is someone who goes to protests and throws rocks in the office windows of big bad guys (or maybe just guys with a lot of money). Others would say that activists are people who deeply care about certain issues. But when we begin to examine the broader context and start questioning why and how someone becomes defined as an "activist," our

concept of "activism" gets kinda fuzzy, as does our definition. If Jennie likes to go to demos to meet people, is she an "activist?" If my butcher really cares about Pavarotti and his godmother, is he an "activist?" If I happen to care about where I get my food and I make painstaking efforts to find out, but I abhor partisan politics, am I an "activist?" So you see, my question is, where do we draw the line and who draws it anyway? Is it us or someone else?

I would never consider myself an activist. I am Tan-Nee. A person...who happens to think a certain way and do certain stuff, and that is what constitutes Tan-Nee. That is all - nothing more, nothing less. Yet, I have been unfairly labeled, classified, categorized, identified, and misrepresented as a "class" in numerous articles and reports in the independent and mass media based on what other people think of me and what I do/how I conduct myself. So, this entire hubbub about "activists" is really starting to get to me.

I guess my whole take on the issue is that if you have an opinion about something, write about it, but if you are really concerned about the issue at hand, then do something about it. Otherwise you are just detracting attention away from what really matters, in this case an impending war with Iraq. If you believe that the massive death and destruction set off by war will never yield the conditions for justice and peace and that war cannot be a remedy for the threat of attack, then organize your own rally, or go "to the people" yourself and do things the "right" way. Find people who care about the same issues you do and start a group, write a constructive article, or letter to your local MP voicing your concerns.

And remember the anti-war march at city hall tomorrow, February 15th. Tell your friends!

The inoculated mind: birds do it and bees do too

A unique look into the 'Valentine's Day' of others

by Karl J. Mogel
The California Aggie

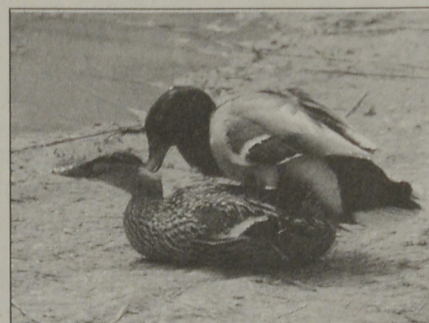
(U-WIRE) DAVIS, Calif. — Valentine's Day is the single most recognized day of the year for human courtship and mating rituals. It usually includes flowers, chocolates and nuptial meals. Nuptial meal — doesn't that sound a little too official for a couple out on a date? That's the biologist in me speaking; I consider it a natural human mating behavior which is also exhibited in other species.

That begs the question, just what are our natural mating behaviors? If you see a wild animal performing a behavior, you would often call it natural, yet many of the things that humans do during courtship or copulation are labeled as unnatural, or we simply don't know. But if the birds and bees do it, it must be natural, mustn't it?

I know many will be using the time-tested courtship strategy known as the nuptial meal this weekend. For some insect species, this is the only way they know how to attract mates. Scorpion flies and hanging flies will steal prey from spiderwebs and start looking for a hungry female. The food is exchanged, and they copulate. It makes our Valentine's Day customs look totally natural.

The clicker round-winged katydid takes food and sex to the next level. Males will attach a little meal, called a spermatophylax, to the package of sperm that he transfers to the female. She will eat this little morsel, which keeps her from eating the sperm package right away, allowing for fertilization. This just goes to show that food in the bedroom is just as good as food before the bedroom.

The most extreme form of the nuptial meal is when the male himself is eaten, as with some arachnids and praying mantises. Insects have all sorts of weird behaviors, but it is not certain whether



they feel pleasure as we do, and besides, some of the things they do are revolting. Perhaps it would be better to consider the mating habits of vertebrates instead.

The "kissing gurami," a type of labyrinth fish, got its common name from its most curious courtship behaviors. When these fish pair up to mate, they stick their mouths together and use their lips to nibble and communicate their feelings to each other. Yes, they kiss, and may do so for up to 25 minutes, a world record. Our closest primate relatives also use their sensitive lips in kissing behaviors, so it is no small wonder that humans practice it.

Male red deer have a unique method of stimulation that deserves mention. The tips of their antlers are very sensitive, such that they can cause themselves to have an erection and ejaculate in under 20 seconds just by rubbing their antlers in some bushes. Hey, whatever works for them.

Chimpanzee females will copulate with multiple males until they pair off with a single male for an extended period of time, which increases the chances of the offspring being his as well. Interestingly, this is not too unlike humans dating different individuals for a few years before pairing off for a monogamous



marriage for the purpose of raising children.

On a slightly different topic, as many as 10 to 20 percent of grizzly, black and polar bears are born as hermaphrodites, bearing observable sexual characteristics of both males and females. In fact, over 470 animal species have been found to have similar instances of sexual variability. Many zoologists call them unnatural, aberrant, even perverse or immoral, in an attempt to pathologize this condition. If it occurs with such frequency, is it not then normal?

Like the bears, a small percentage of humans are actually born gender-nonspecific. They possess secondary sex characteristics of both sexes or have genitals that are somewhat halfway between male and female versions. The penis and clitoris, and scrotum and labia, are homologous structures which can be converted to each other at an early age. Thus, surgery is performed on them to make them more male-like or female-like, but often, they will have difficulties with sexual identity in a society preoccupied with maintaining a clear dichotomy. Their behaviors are different, and labeled as "aberrant," which is rather funny considering that such aberrant individuals occur normally in other species.

But that still leaves the question: What is natural for us? You could spend your entire life searching for other animals that do the same things as we do, but not understand what makes them natural. What makes our behaviors natural is that we do them, which is independent of whether they are beneficial or not. To say that rape, oral sex, or doggie-style may all be natural is not a value judgment. To say that something is natural is not to justify doing it.

What matters in courtship, pair-bonding, and mating is that we make ourselves and our mates feel good in whatever way we feel comfortable doing. This is the goal that we naturally gravitate towards, and what courtship or copulatory behaviors we choose matter little. But really, try not to eat your mates this Friday.

Cuba: Leading by example

An honest look at the country's quest for human rights and democracy

by Shane Ruttle Martinez

This is the second in a two-part series on Cuba. Last week's article explored the country's democracy and education.

Health Care

Health care is free for all Cubans and those visiting Cuba, one of the many significant accomplishments of the Revolution, as well as the incredible results this has produced in the health of its citizens and help provided abroad.

Thousands of doctors have been, and are still, sent around the world to help those who cannot help themselves. The infant mortality rate in Cuba is 6.4 per 1,000 births, which is less than the US rate (7 per 1,000 births). The Western lies about how living conditions in Cuba are horrendous, with the people not being taken care of, are largely disproved when one learns the average life span of Cubans is 75.7 years, living a life often far more jubilant and empowered than the typical droning wage-slave existence many experience in Canada and the US.

Human Rights

One of the most spectacular examples of the propagation and support for human rights is the country of Cuba. If you've ever discussed the island while in high school, or even university for that matter, you've likely heard much to the contrary from your white Western male 'educators.' The government, truly one that is by and for the People, uplifts the values of human dignity and respect every day in actions of selflessness and cooperation that are largely unknown to Western capitalist nations. It is one of the few countries that gives its children a sizeable role of participation in the operation of affairs, and supports the advancement of women and members of traditionally marginalized groups.

One of the dominant views in Cuba towards human rights is in the sphere of economics. A belief held by many there, and around the world, that without the fulfillment of economic rights which guarantee people a secure, safe and healthy existence, are simply turned into mere privileges enjoyed fully only by those who are in a stable position in society. The majority of social ills and deviance in Western nations are the

product of a capitalist system which manages to marginalize and alienate everyone within it, from not only themselves but those around them, and the means of production.

Let's think about the concept of 'rights' for a moment, where they come from, and how. When a person's most basic needs and rights are met, when people are guaranteed a safe life, free from all manner of exploitation, they can then begin to genuinely enjoy and partake in other rights in a meaningful way. Economic rights are a most definite prerequisite to any and all other rights, for without economic security and knowledge that one's family and comrades are safe from being attacked at the source of their survival, the enjoyment of other rights becomes a privilege for those who are comfortable enough to fully do so.

When supposed 'violations' of human rights do occur in Cuba, they are often identified by selfish elitists such as Brothers to the Rescue, and Capitalism Magazine. Not only do they carry out intimidating missions (such as those by Brothers to the Rescue, who flew over Cuba illegally polluting the island with illegal anti-Castro propaganda drops), they also spread half-truths, and outright lies in many cases, about the political situation and human rights issues in Cuba.

Other organizations, such as the well-respected Amnesty International, present with disturbing frequency a rather uneducated and ethnocentric view on world affairs in their critique of the Cuban political system, and the government's attitude towards dissent.

As you've probably heard, some Canadians who choose to spend their March Break or winter vacation in Cuba come back to Canada with the mind set of: "Oh those poor Cubans, they don't have the luxuries of designer sweatshop clothes, DVD players, and expensive cars that we fight each other for here!" The country has fared amazingly well though, despite the barrage of attempted oppression by those who seek to undermine its self-determination and autonomy from yanqui imperialism. Measures have been put into place to ensure all are protected against the deceiving and manipulative acts of subversion and exploitation perpetrated by the likes of the Miami Mafia (a large criminal organization of anti-Cuban terrorists) and others. These are often enacted to counter missions carried out

by violent, unscrupulous individuals who seek to murder Cuban governmental officials. Safety is also paramount in preventing CIA-sponsored terrorism against the island. The US spy organization has been involved time and again in incidents of spreading infectious diseases throughout Cuba, targeting plants, animals, and people.

It is undeniable that Cuba has continuously proven itself to be a world leader in human rights. The country has faced extremely difficult tasks presented as a result of US hostility and attacks, and has fared better than almost any other country ever to meet such challenges. The Revolution has never bowed to the whims of the free market, and has managed to take advantage of foreign capitalism when it was needed to do so. The Cuban people are still defending the Revolution diligently, against all odds.

Two groups involved in economic and political solidarity work, are the NSCUBA and the Che Guevara Brigade. Our best opportunity at helping the country and people of Cuba is to follow in their Revolutionary footsteps and choose to liberate ourselves from the confines of capitalist slavery. They have sacrificed much to be a model example to the world of exactly what immense accomplishments can be made through uniting and forging into the future with a common goal and sense of community.

The constant valuable contributions made by the Cuban people and government to the world must not be overlooked but celebrated and studied during our own struggle for freedom and self-determination.

Much thanks and solidarity to NSCUBA, Afro Cuba Web, and Granma International for their help in providing the resources needed to write this article.

NSCUBA
P.O. Box 632, Halifax Central,
Halifax, NS
B3J 2T3
info@nscuba.org
(902) 422-4606

Che Guevara Brigade
Hillcrest RPO
P.O. Box 74091
Vancouver, BC
Canada
che_guevara_brigade@yahoo.com
(604) 831-9821