

COMMENTS & LETTERS

eic@unb.ca • January 25, 2006

Why are we boiling mad over water?

by Carolynne Burkholder
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The Manitoban
(University of Manitoba)

VANCOUVER (CUP) -- In theory, it should be as simple as the law of supply and demand. We have water to spare; they need it and are willing to pay for it. But unlike other Canadian resources that we are willing to sell out to the highest bidder, water tugs on our emotions. It's the proverbial stuff of life and we won't let it go without a fight.

Former U.S. ambassador to Canada Paul Cellucci was quoted in a recent Canadian Press article, expressing his confusion with the opposition to water sales in Canada. "Water is... a very valuable commodity, and I've always found it odd where Canada is so willing to sell oil and natural gas and uranium and coal, which are by their very nature finite. But talking about water is off the table, and water is renewable," he said. "It doesn't make any sense to me."

What Cellucci fails to see - or chooses to ignore - is that Canadians don't have the emotional attachment to oil, uranium, or coal that we have to water. That despite all logical arguments, Canadians continue to be incensed over this non-issue.

Undeniably, world statistics are frightening: 1.1 billion people in the world currently do not have access to clean drinking water. According to U.N. estimates, this number will increase to 5.5 billion in the next 20 years.

But most of the people to which these statistics refer live in developing countries. And as Canadians continue to demonstrate, if we're separated by an ocean, it's not our problem. These statistics are not the reason that Canadians are protesting water exports. It's the impending water crisis in the U.S. - striking us much closer to home - that accounts for the growing hysteria associated with water sales.

Maclean's magazine came under huge criticism last month for their controversial cover story on exporting water to the U.S., which

declared: "We should tone down the emotion and figure out how to sell it to them."

As much as I hate to admit it, I agree with Steve Maich from Maclean's on this one. We should put our emotions aside and think about this logically; it is in our best interest to sell our water. But Maich and I seem to be the only ones who feel this way.

Defying all common sense, Canadians have opened up the emotional floodgates in opposition to the export of water.

The main point endorsed by these opponents is that Canada's supply of water is not infinite. With the glacial melting, we could soon face a water crisis of our own, so how can we think of sharing?

This emotional reasoning does not take into account that Canada "lucked out in the global water sweeps" as the CBC brilliantly puts it, holding between 5 and 25 per cent of the world's fresh water - depending on how you calculate "fresh" and "accessible."

There isn't currently, and has never been, a water crisis here in Canada.

Canadians are among the world's worst water wasters, a point for which we have been lambasted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. According to the Center for Ecology and Hydrology in Wallingford, England, we are the second most wasteful users of water in the world - behind Finland - and we still have water to spare.

Maybe if we want to save water, we should start in our own homes - not leaving the sprinklers on all night and running the tap until the water gets cold enough to drink. But it is much easier to protest in favour of conserving water than to actually conserve it.

There is no logical reason not to capitalize on our country's assets. Despite what many anti-trade activists would have you believe - and emotionally driven Canadians often do - agreeing to sell a small amount of water would not open the proverbial floodgates to unlimited water exports.

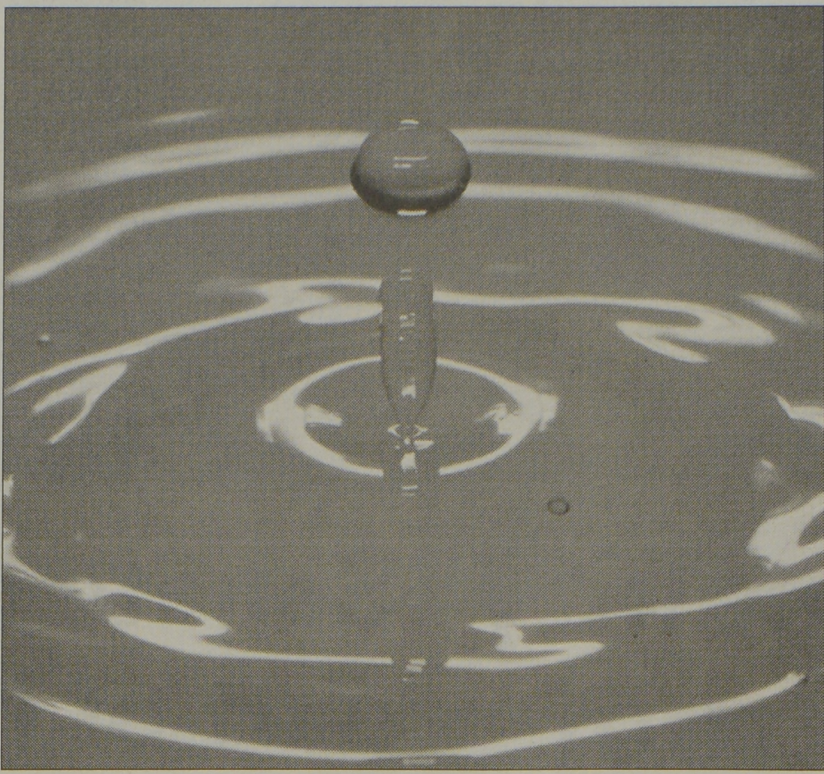
The often-cited NAFTA clause states that if something is sold - even once - as a commodity, the government cannot stop its sale in the future. This passage, in itself,

is frightening. But like most public policy, it is limited. NAFTA also contains a passage stating that governments can put limits on trade to conserve exhaustible natural resources - water being one.

Fortune magazine calls water exporting "one of the world's

great business opportunities." The magazine goes on to say, "It promises to be to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th."

We already capitalize on our oil and our lumber, so why not our water? Put all the emotional rhetoric aside, and it just makes sense.



Taking the 'man' out of 'woman'

Dear Editor,

There comes a time when we all need to ask ourselves what the purpose of education is; William Godwin once begged of us to "... not, in the eagerness of our haste to educate, forget all the ends of education." But it seems that in the long process of indoctrination, we have forgotten the importance of creativity - the goal of stimulating and encouraging a mind to develop on its own course.

Feminist thinkers have a tradition of examining language and the social constructs that it establishes, perpetuates, or mirrors. It has not at all been uncommon for wimmin to reject the spelling of the words "woman" and "women" on the grounds that they relate to social subordination. These wimmin feel as though they should have the right, as a womyn, to choose how a term that refers to them is spelled. It is not uncommon, and I think we can all agree, that "man" is often used as a default category under which we include men and wimmin. Restructuring language, there-

fore, is a powerful option for many feminists who wish to change the perceptions and understandings of gender and gender roles.

As a sociology student, I am appalled that a professor of Arts refuses to accept this and further appalled that the Associate Dean of Arts complies with this decision. Knowing very well the arguments for using this language, they reject it and are now forcing a young sociology student to comply with their regulations. This student is no longer allowed to spell womyn with a "y" again at UNB even if she provides the appropriate reasons for doing so within the paper. She will only be allowed to do so when she is out of this university. Needless to say, we will both continue to spell womyn with a "y".

Again, let's ask ourselves what the purpose of education is. If things are going to change it's because we say they have to change, not because we blindly listen to the orders of our professors.

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Sociology (Hon) UNB

Sex revolution: rights & responsibilities

MUGWUMP

by Greg LeBlanc

Canada seems to be in the middle of a sexual revolution: gays have legal marriage and swingers have legal clubs; now the polygamists want some of the action. What's next, people who want to marry blueberry pie?

Seriously though. Our great nation, perhaps the most tolerant, rights-bearing and friendly country in the world, has been doing a flurry of legalizing lately. Though it's been mostly good so far, to what lengths will we go?

First, Harper brought up the gay marriage question... again. Really, haven't we already had that conversation? Who are we to decide what love is anyways? Beyond the bond, it just gives them rights to property and parenting - what's wrong with that? At least there won't be any surprise pregnancies.

Then, Canada's swingers (there are over a million of them, polls suggest) got a big thumbs up from the supreme court when seven of nine judges agreed that their wild, romping sex orgies were not harmful to "the proper functioning of Canadian society." The judges may have had a party of their own after the decision was made; who knows what they wear under their robes.

Since the decision, swinger clubs across the nation have been flooded with business; they can't clean the rooms fast enough.

Couples from as far away as Texas and France have been injecting hard, exotic currency into our economy; yet another boost for tourism!

Religious groups have berated the court's ruling, saying that it is offensive to our sense of decency. Though it may be closer to hell for some, for others, it's a piece of heaven. Besides, a society as wealthy as ours that still has homeless people roaming the streets is a lot more indecent than allowing a group of mutually consenting adults to fulfill their sexual fantasies.

But just when I'd thought I heard the last of it, I read that the federal government spent \$150,000 to look at polygamy (men who want multiple wives). The wasted money aside, this comes as a surprise to me.

The recommendation: legalize polygamy and change legislation to help women and children living in plural relationships. Bam! The government never ceases to shock me.

In some communities, such as the appropriately named Bountiful, BC, Mormons have been practicing polygamy for the past 60 years. They claim it is religiously discriminatory to ban such marriages.

Polygamy isn't new. It's been practiced for thousands of years and is still common (and legal) in parts of the Arab world. Where it is legal, husbands must prove that they are able to treat all of the women equally.

The United Nations has policies that do not approve of such

actions, however, claiming that it is discriminatory to women; so to create laws here condoning polygamy would be to violate the UN.

I'll have to go with the UN on this one. How can a man rightly say that he can treat all of his wives equally, and if he did, it would be to treat them all badly. Heck, any man I've ever met has a hard enough time treating one woman equally, let alone five.

I mean, is there a strong demand for polyandry? No. What woman in her right mind would want to be married to more than one man, at least not unless she could convince them to all to cook and clean.

Back to the point: we need to draw a line, somewhere - and we

need to do it soon.

As much as this is a debate about rights, we also need to be discussing responsibilities.

Society has the responsibility to accept and protect what is fair, equal and just, any more is authoritarian and any less is discriminatory.

A man with more than one wife just isn't fair to those women, or other men for that matter. Lets not get swept up in the sexual revolution. Society is built on evolution, which takes time, and so should granting sexual freedoms.

Freedom should be limited by fairness and equality; for as much as we need rights, we need to have the responsibility to deserve them.



A cartoon depicting fears that Mormons would quickly spread their polygamy and "enslave" the women of Utah.

Dr. T. Wayne Lenehan / Dr. M. Michele Leger
Optometrists
"Family Eye Care"

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Eye Examinations
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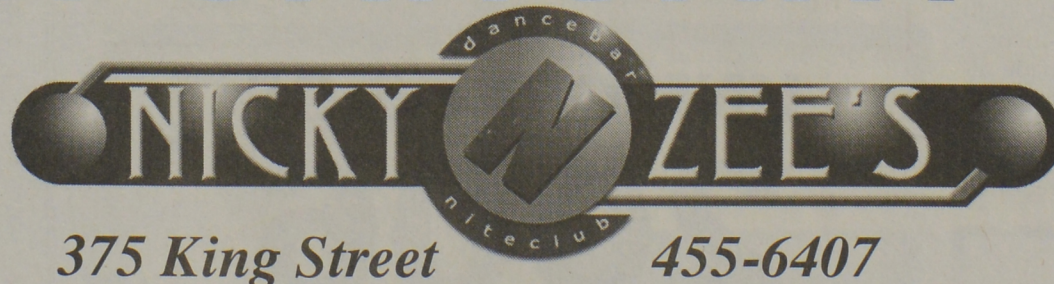
New Patients Welcome



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Monday-Friday: 8am - 5pm; Thursday: 8am - 8pm
512 George St.

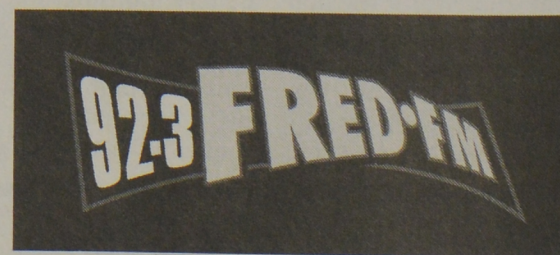


FRIDAY JANUARY 27/06



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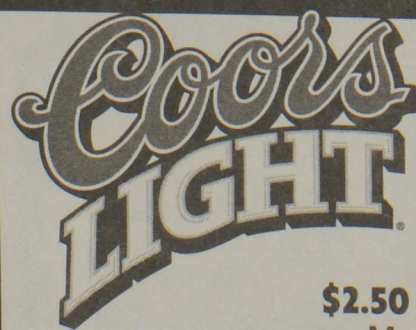
90's Night (90's music + Dressup)

\$200 cash prize for best 90's outfit
Plus we are giving away a pair of
tickets to Collective Soul

10pm - Midnight (rum, rye, vodka, gin)

10 pm - Close \$3.25 Canadian & Canadian Lt Bottles

Ladies Nite Too - No Cover For Ladies All Night



Monday's
Movie Night
99¢ Coors Light Draft (8 oz) 7-close
PLUS

\$2.50 Gunshots (rum, rye, vodka, gin) 4-close
Movies Start at 8:00 p.m. No Cover



Saturday's
Freddy's Biggest Party

\$3.25 Alpine & Moose Light Bottles 10pm till close

Andrew Brown & A Few Playing Friday & Saturday

