So where's my perfect cereal already?

GRINDS MY GEARS

by Courtenay Courrier

Like many people who grew up in the '90s, I was raised on Freakazoid cartoons and a steady diet of breakfast cereal. Recently, however, I've come to be frustrated by the cereal choices at the grocery store. As I was browsing the cereal aisle yesterday, I simply could not make up my mind as to what I wanted.

Following the lead of other industries, cereal companies started making different variations of their products. Just like Kit Kat getting all fancied up in many forms (caramel, peanut butter, cinnamon, etc.), Tony the Tiger is now on boxes of cereal other than Frosted Flakes, and Lucky Charms turned chocolate. While this may sound like nothing less than fantastic, we still haven't discovered the ultimate cereal.

There is now a split decision between classic cereals and newer versions of the same things in different shapes, with more sugar. But they more or less run into each other. For example, Count Chocula has been around forever, but now we have chocolate lucky charms -- seemingly the same cereal. However, while the Count does have a tastier corn cereal as well as softer marshmallows, Chocolate Lucky Charms have a superior cereal-to-marshmallow ratio, making deciding between the two very difficult.

But it's not just about changing cereals; it's about the "perfect" cereal. As a kid, I always knew exactly what I wanted for breakfast (and lunch, and supper) when it came to cereal. But with more and more choices, I began to get confused as to what I wanted. While my brother was blown away by Strawberry Honeycombs, I knew that although there was a greater selection, there's never been one that does it just for me.

My frustrations began to grow as I tried more and more "nearly there" cereals. The closest cereal, by far, to create the feeling of love between an individual and the contents of the bowl was that mini cinnamon bun cereal that they stopped selling a few years after I fell in love with them. My cereal disappointment compounded, I stopped trying for a few years, with the hope that either a) I would find a box of cereal that I'd always liked, and the years between us would turn into love, or b) they'd actually make the perfect cereal in that time and I would be happy once again. Neither happened.

My frustration now lies with constant variations of the same thing. Any new chocolate bars we get don't seem to last long. We only get different classics. The same is true with cereal. We don't get anything really new or radically different. We get the same thing, mutated and then fed to us as something new. Things are starting to taste the same.

It's possible that manufacturers simply ran out of new ideas. But they shouldn't stop trying, as they haven't yet achieved perfection. It could have something to do with people being more comfortable with what they know, as many people really don't accept change (sadly). But really, we need to start getting new ideas again -- we need to think again. Not every idea has been thought of yet, and when it comes to something as beloved to me as my cereal, we should all try a little harder. Perfection is still within reach.

SLIC response

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to What has the SU Done for You published Feb 7th.

The reference to the Student Legal Information Centre indicated that "many" students were dissatisfied with the service, yet only one student was quoted.

He didn't indicate the reason for his visit, so I thought we should let your readers know exactly what we offer to students.

The service is available only to full-time, undergraduate students. It is a Student Union service and full-time undergraduates are the only students who pay student union fees.

The centre is run by law student volunteers, not lawyers, and there is a limit to what we are able to do for students.

Our focus is landlord-tenant issues, employment issues and small claims. If a student has one of these issues, we can help.

Students sometimes don't get the answers they are seeking simply because the answer is not what they want to hear.

We cannot invent laws that will resolve an issue in their favour. All we can do is tell them what the existing laws are so that, being informed, they can decide what to do next.

If a student has been charged with a crime, we can only encourage that student to retain a lawyer.

If a student has been injured and wants to sue someone, again, we simply encourage that person to see a lawyer.

While they could file a small claims action (and we can help with this), often their injuries justify more compensation than small claims can offer ($6000 maximum), so it is in the student's interest to pursue other possibilities.

As for the lone student quoted in the article, perhaps we simply were not equipped to deal with his problem. But in any case, I encourage any student who feels that they have been unfairly turned away or is otherwise dissatisfied to contact me and I will do my best to resolve the issue.

Kellie Cullihall
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FCC looking to regulate TV violence

MUGWUMP

by Tony von Richter

Okay, so who likes watching Prison Break at 9 pm every Monday? How about 24 at 10? C'mon, let's see a show of hands. Well, if the American Federal Communications Commission (more commonly known as the FCC) gets its way, you might have to stay up a lot longer to watch your favourite shows.

Currently, the FCC regulates sexual indecency on what's known as the broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, etc.) and prevents it from being shown between the hours of 6 am and 10 pm. The commission recently presented their annual report to congress. This year, focusing on TV violence, the key repercussion could be a new legislation banning violent content until later hours.

Putting aside for a moment all the freedom of choice things this may violate, there's one little problem with regulating violence.

Uh, just what is violence anyway?

Is it just people fighting and shooting at each other, or would a game like football fall under the violence regulations? Is it really worse to see a cartoon getting hit in the head with something or to see a replay of Brendan Shanahan colliding with Mike Knuble?

Jonathan Rintels, executive director for the Center for Creative Voices in Media, put it best when he said, "Will it count on the news? Will it count on news magazines like 60 Minutes and Dateline? What about hockey games when the gloves come off and people start punching each other?"

One of the concerns cited in the report states that violence can lead to "short-term aggressive behavior in children." Somehow I doubt that is really the case, since I haven't heard about an epidemic of children trying to harm their parents and siblings after watching something they just saw on TV.

Does violent programming affect some kids? It probably does, but if that's the case, then why aren't their parents preventing them from watching those programs?

Well, parents can't be there all the time right? So surely someone should step in and make sure these kids aren't watching harmful programs?

Nope, not really because you see there's this little thing called the V-chip that's been installed in every TV (13-inches or larger) made for sale in the U.S. starting January, 1st, 2000, that can block shows with inappropriate ratings.

So, if parents can, (or at least should be) monitoring their children's viewing habits and they can program their TVs to block shows when they're not around, why would the government need to step in as well?

It's all so preposterous that it reminds me of the Family Guy episode where the FCC tries to regulate real life, just not as funny.

Now obviously this is only a report at this stage and hasn't really resulted in any changes yet, and I don't think it will. The media backlash will be so intense that no politician would ever back such a proposal.

The big issue though is that of censorship and personal choice. If I choose to watch a show featuring lots of fighting and violence then that's my choice. It's also my choice that if I see something on another channel that I consider offensive, I simply change the channel.

That might be the most important thing for the FCC to realize. We've had an amazingly effective censorship system in place for years. It's called a remote.

The best of both worlds: Welcome to the Maritimes!

by Basil Junaid Khan

An international student is about to land in Fredericton, NB for the first time. While looking out Air Canada's luxurious Boeing 747 (I'm trying to say that in the most sarcastic way possible) our student suspects the pilot is making an emergency landing for fuel.

She thinks to herself, "This can't be Fredericton, can it? This place looks like a village. Is that an airport, or a storage shed for paper airplanes?"

Potential international students can't wait to begin this semester. Especially after seeing all the cool pictures that make Fredericton appear gigantic, and reading facts from unb.ca, that its engineering faculty was ranked top in the country by Macleans.ca. Note the key words here are "appear" and "was."

Don't get me wrong. I love UNB and Fredericton, and we're all here for a reason! You see, I have best of both worlds. I'm a Canadian-born visible minority commonly mistaken for an international student. That doesn't bother me though; many of my close friends are international students, but I realize that there some stereotypes that need to be cleared up on both sides:

#1: International Students do speak English.

International Student: "Excuse me; do you know where room 122B is?"

Maritimer: "Hello there little fellow, welcome to our country. Room 122B is down the hall, take a right, go up the stairs and you'll be there. Again, that's down the hall, take a right, not left, a right, and go up the stairs. You'll have to walk up those 'step' things, you know!" If you've gotten to this point, you might as well just draw a map.

#2: There are cultural differences, but not that much!

International students aren't from third world countries. In fact, have you ever heard of Dubai, UAE? UNB has a recruiting office there; try googling it. I think you'll be surprised. It's the fastest growing city in the world, oil-rich, and cops drive BMWs. Yeah, a BMW, ever see one? No, cause the best car you'll find in Fredericton in a Volkswagen Golf.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to "diss" the Maritimes. In fact, after living in Southern Ontario and Calgary, Alberta, I can say Maritimers are the nicest people I've ever met in all of Canada. But again, there are some things we need to clear up:

#3: For the Maritimers again, you know that isn't English you're speaking right? It's only people in the Maritimes that talk like that. The rest of Canadians -- like those in Toronto or Vancouver -- speak in hip hop slang -- you know, the type of lingo teenage suburban gangster wannabes use.

And those out-of-the-province Newfoundlanders or students from PEI don't even come close to speaking English. Even the locals make fun of the way you guys talk. "Hey y'all goin' out ta'tha Baaurs tunnight?" What the hell did she just say? Since when did the word "bar" have a "u" in it? You guys remind me of Jeff Foxworthy's take on rednecks.

And wow, international students, be prepared to feel like squirrels, because you too will hibernate in the winter. This hibernation will most definitely involve countless hours on facebook.com. You'll be shocked when you figure out the hottest girl in the class has a boyfriend three times your size. Sorry, looks like you have no chance whatsoever.

Oh yeah, and of course there's more to do in Fredericton than getting drunk. You can go to the enormous mall, or watch a movie, or go skiing -- 'cause, hell, there seems to be snow all year 'round. However, I have to say, Fredericton is nice in the summer, a secluded getaway spot for somebody with a high-profile criminal background.

I'd make fun of my international student friends too but they might come after me. Even after hearing my complaints about Fredericton, most international students I know embrace it and enjoy the local hospitality. As for advice, take advantage of the small class sizes. Joey LeBlanc will be in your accounting, finance, history, and calculus class, so you can copy all the assignments from him.

I hope you guys enjoyed this little piece. I'm just teasing really, and didn't mean to offend anybody. On that note, here's a helpful hint: The next time you try to pronounce an international student's name, don't even bother, just call him or her "Sara" or "Bob;" they'll understand. Hey it isn't easy, try going to China or India, and ask somebody to pronounce "Thomas Thompson." You'll probably end up hearing "Toomass Humpin."

Good luck to everybody on their midterms!

The Brunswickan

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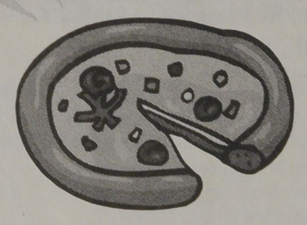
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Fine print: Prizes: One $2500 grand prize, one $1500 second prize, one $1000 third prize and twelve $250 extra prizes.

Contest is only open to students currently enrolled at a Canadian post-secondary institution. The good news is it's available for a *very* limited time, so your odds of winning are awesome.

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