



Toronto's Other Voice

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No fooling

Some April Fool's gag. Nope, we're not talking about the weather. Nor are we mentioning yesterday's editorial, Donato cartoon, Smyth column, Dr. Foth's praise for some Ichabod Crane-like MP, and Dunf's expose about the new element called administratium.

We certainly delivered on the grand old newspaper tradition of not letting an April 1 pass without pulling our reader's leg, as difficult as that may be in an age where truth in the news is often stranger than anything you could attempt to make up.

There was a sordid example of that when readers turned yesterday to Chris Blizzard's column about Toronto city council spending \$1.2 million to renovate a downtown theatre for a gay/lesbian theatre group.

The group called Buddies in Bad Times also got \$58,908 in a "culture" grant from the city.

So there are pertinent reasons besides good taste and common sense and a normal revulsion against violent perversion why Torontonians should be concerned about what the group proposes for a "Queerculture" festival.

There will be sado-masochism seminars with live demonstrations - described as "hands-on, pants down approach to SM techniques and safety."

The audience will learn all about creative bondage, sensory deprivation, use of implements like paddles, brute force, abduction, anal fisting, guns, knives, forced confinement and rape play.

Then there's a girls-only, hands-on party to learn to ejaculate.

Which brings us back to April Fool's. There were readers who just didn't believe this stuff. One reader called on behalf of an office group who had been arguing since work began about whether this was April Fool's.

Sorry, it is true. We wish we could say it was true, that plans for this trash - that probably offends many members of the homosexual communities as well as the rest of us - would melt away under the light of public exposure, but there's no telling with this council or radical gays.

On their calendar, every day is April 1.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LORRIE GOLDSTEIN was quite right in taking exception to the statements questioning the monarchy's relevance after the publication of the Benetton picture of the Queen (*Sun*, March 30). The monarchy in Canada has always been especially relevant with respect to the issue of racial equality. For example, in July we will mark the 200th anniversary of the passing into law of Governor Simcoe's anti-slavery legislation by the Parliament of Upper Canada which preceded similar laws in Britain and the

U.S. by many years. When former black slaves escaped to Canada from the U.S., they found that the Crown and the protection it extended to all its subjects provided them with the legal and legislative resources needed to defend themselves and to combat racism effectively. Arriving here on the famous underground railroad, these ex-slaves sang songs about this land and the freedom that its constitutional monarchy offered them and all people who together form the human race. So let us remember that the tradition of monarchy lies at the heart of the cultural heritage of many Canadian citizens, be they of Asian, African or European background.

Alexander Roman Willowdale

(Well said)

GORDON VINKLE (Letters, March 18) points out that the changing design of Toronto libraries is upsetting. He feels a library should be a place of quiet reading and peaceful enjoyment. I would like to bring Vinkle into the '90s. With all the violence and nonsense on TV should we as parents not have the right to introduce our children to the knowledgeable world of books? I have a young child (almost 3) and we

go to the library about once a month. We participate in a group activity (sponsored by the library staff) - we read a book, and yes, sometimes play with toys. I am with my child the whole time (she is not in daycare). I think Vinkle's generation of children being seen and not heard (thank heaven) is gone forever. Even if I were to go to the library alone, the children's section at my library (Wychwood) is tucked away from the adult section. Regardless, seeing children at a library is far better than seeing them hanging around the streets and corner stores aimlessly.

(As long as the children's section is removed from the adult section, no problem)

THE REFORM PARTY has at last shown its true colors. It seems hypocritical of a so-called right wing party to oppose the candidacy of an anti-communist like John Gamble. John Gamble is not a Heritage Front member or a racist. He was a front line anti-communist during the Cold War and had the courage to say so. The Reform Party should be proud to have such a candidate. But, alas, I fear Preston Manning is another one of those closet

Liberals and only used the grassroots conservative movement as a means to an end. At least the rest of us now know that we need not bother joining an organization that has no intention of reforming this country. Is Manning afraid Gamble will make good on Reform Party promises?

Urmias A. Toming Willowdale

(Overruling a riding's choice doesn't do much for Reform's grassroots image)

RE "IN the Villages of Death," (*Saturday Sun*, March 27): Paul Jackson deserves to be congratulated for the courage that he showed in going to that part of the world and reporting on the sickening atrocities being committed by these Nazi-like Serbs. What I found truly disquieting after reading the article - even more than the heinous crimes of the Serbs - is the lack of response by the "civilized" world. Western leaders, who were so eager to start an economic war against Iraq and were so outraged by that nation's soldiers setting oil wells ablaze, are not doing anything to stop the genocide in Bosnia. The Muslim world has not been much better in responding to these atrocities

against their kin - a fact noted many times by your excellent columnist Eric Margolis. Serbia must be punished for its aggression against innocent Muslims and Croats. Unfortunately, the world has done nothing. Jackson summed up my sentiments best: "Genocide is taking place here. A genocide that we swore we would never allow." Shame on us.

G. Razihuddin Toronto

(Indeed)

TELL ME it's an April Fool's joke - tell me that Toronto city council isn't really going to spend \$1.2 million to refurbish a theatre for gays/lesbians. Surely Christina Blizzard was having us on when she says city council is giving a grant of almost \$60,000 to this same theatre group so they can, among other things, run S&M seminars that involve whips, paddles, knives and guns? Does the average taxpayer in Toronto actually realize what's happening to some of his/her hard-earned money? I guess not, or I'm sure there'd be rioting in the streets. All I can say is thank heavens I live in North York.

P.A. Flynn North York

(The only joke is on Toronto-tax-payers)

SUNtoon by PHILLIPS

