

DIATRIBE



EDITORIAL

DIATRIBE

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DIATRIBE

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A bunchus of pretentious latinus
AUGUSTUS

“I am like so left wing,” says the girl in the Gap sweater set while sipping her Starbucks coffee. This isn't the new and improved liberalized Queen's- it's in fact a sad testament to our education and how we apply it to our world. This is a symptom of a greater problem here at Queen's - we're a bunch of posers - and mostly left-wing posers at that. It's one thing to think progressively, but it another thing to actually act progressively. That's where it counts and that's where we're severely lacking.

This is not meant to pick on people who are truly left-wing (in speech and in act) and to the very few of you out there, I am truly sorry and have more respect for you than you can imagine. The problem is that most people who I encounter who are "left-wing" are just posers, people taking on a fad-like political mantra to be cool. And at Queen's, being left-wing is "cool", just like wearing Uggs and doing one's hair in a fauxhawk seems to be "cool" these days. And just like Uggs and fauxhawks, I wonder how long this will last.

Queen's is not a left-wing university. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but really, think critically about this one. Calling yourself left-wing if you shop at the Gap, drink coffee anywhere other than at the Goat, and drive gas-burning cars is like calling yourself a vegan while eating a cow - it just doesn't work that way. If anything, all of this "I'm so left-wing" talk makes people look like uneducated fools who wouldn't recognize a genuine left-wing person if they stumbled onto the Revolutionary Knitting Circle.

The Queen's reputation on the outside is that it is a highly conservative WASP university. No one actually comes to Queen's for its left-wing appeal. In fact the most surprising thing to me in my past 4 years is the fact that Queen's from the "inside" considers itself to be left-wing. Demographically, Queen's attracts top students, many of whom come from the elite private schools Canada and

abroad, and this has huge impact on the environment at Queen's. This is not to say that people who are rich and white cannot be liberal, but rather I question the means that some people use to carry out their goodwill in society. When the Bank of Mom and Dad runs dry, will we all be so willing to fund the social programs that we value so much now when it comes directly from our own pockets?

Even look around the campus, beyond the fashionable clothes that are most likely made in sweat shops, and some obvious errors in logic pop up. CFRC screams left-wing, yet no one listens to it because they don't play Justin Timberlake. Community radio, indie music, and social issues shows, such as Groundswell, should be all the rage at this campus if we really are who we claim to be.

Another great example is that of the Coke contract that we seem to hate so much. However, people at Queen's love to drink Coke. If our actions matched our words, every single time someone drank bottle of Coke at Queen's they would have to stand at the top of the stair in the JDUC and scream "I support capitalism" because if you cared enough to complain about Coke, you should also care enough to drink something else. But the fact of the matter is that we seem to like to have our Coke and drink it too.

Being openly right-wing at Queen's has taken on such a bad stigma. It's almost like being a nonconformist at Queen's - how radical and ironic! The right-wing is deemed unprogressive and narrow minded, and is scoffed at instead of questioned and learned by those who would like to think that there is only one way to think. What's really unprogressive and narrow-minded is claiming to be educated yet still not being fully aware of the implications of your actions and not respecting alternative viewpoints. Let's get out of denial.

- Catherine Shea

Letter to the Editor

I found your past issue to be extremely distasteful. It seemed as if every second page was filled with either vulgar obscenities or crude sexual language. Mr. Pius's article on 'picking up' was the worst, but by no means the only offender. The photo on page 9 was highly suggestive - I doubt it was innocently intended - and I almost choked on my english muffin before I realized the nature of the appendage in question. Even Mr. Aikins was unable to resist the temptation to curse in the title of his otherwise sterile article ('How Advertising Fucks Up Our Society').

Your magazine does nothing but incite an already vulgar and sex-obsessed Queen's populace to further depravities.

It is apparent that the mealy-mouthed staff at Diatribe finds a great pleasure in abusing the ears and eyes of those who have the misfortune to pick it up. I can assure you I will no longer be among that group.

- Samantha Height, Law '06

POLITICS

A CYNIC'S BUFFET

■ ■ ■ Somebody yank my feeding tube
by Putnam Pius

Terri Schiavo's sordid tale illustrates everything that is miserably wrong with our collective existence. A tragedy that gradually became a farce, her 15-year saga provides us with a laundry list of why human beings and their society suck. This includes: the victimization of young women by our obsession with a certain beauty type, the phenomena of our closest relationships becoming our bitterest sources of misery, the moral schizophrenia of contemporary society, the utter pettiness of American partisan politics, the vulturesque voyeurism of the media, and of course the frightening precariousness of the creaky flesh mounds that our consciousness inhabit. Shall we begin?

In 1990 Terri suffers a heart attack at age of 27 as a result of a potassium deficiency most likely caused by her lifelong struggle with bulimia. The heart attack left her with severe brain damage. Like so many women in our society, young Terri felt concerned enough about her body image to starve and purge herself into 'thinness'. The press has delighted in wistfully pointing out her previous beauty, as if that somehow makes her fate more tragic.

In 1993 Michael Schiavo, her husband (they married in 1984), is awarded a \$1 million malpractice judgement against doctors who failed to diagnose Terri's bulimia.

At the malpractice trial, Michael Schiavo testifies, "I believe in the vows that I took with my wife, through sickness, in health, for richer or poorer. I married my wife because I love her and I

want to spend the rest of my life with her. I'm going to do that."

According to Michael's brother, Scott Schiavo, Michael Schiavo's feud with Terri's parents began when Michael refused to share any of the \$1 million judgement with them. In an axe-grinding CNN interview, Scott claimed that Terri's father Bob Schindler promised to make Michael's life a "living hell".

In any case, by 1998 Michael Schiavo and Bob and Mary Schindler have begun their bitter legal battle over Terri's fate, with Michael, who is Terri's legal guardian, arguing that Terri would not have wanted to 'live this way'.

In February 2000, Florida Judge George Greer rules that "clear and convincing evidence shows that Terri Schiavo would not have chosen to receive life-prolonging medical care under her current circumstances." A series of unsuccessful appeals by Terri's parents occur, and on April 24 2001 Terri's tube is removed. Two days later, it is reinserted under a temporary injunction following further legal appeals by the Schindlers.

Another stretch of protracted legal battles ensues, with the courts ruling persistently in Michael Schiavo's favour. According to the courts, Terri is in a 'persistent vegetative state' with no chance of recovery.

On October 15, 2003, Terri's tube is removed for a second time. In a blatant violation of Florida's constitution, Governor Jeb Bush and the Florida legislature ram through a bill that beomes known as 'Terri's Law,' giving Jeb the

power to issue stays in cases like Terri's. Jeb orders Terri's feeding tube re-inserted.

Unsurprisingly a Florida judge soon rules 'Terri's Law' unconstitutional on numerous grounds, primarily that it infringes on the separation of powers between executive and judicial branches. The ruling is eventually upheld in the US Supreme Court.

By the beginning of 2005, the Schiavo affair has become a full-fledged media circus, rivalling the Michael Jackson trial, and easily eclipsing coverage of the newly formed Iraqi government's struggle to build a coalition cabinet. The White House and Republicans in Congress join the fray, spurred on the 'moral values' crowd on the right. Here's some of the highlights:

Republican House Majority Leader Tom Delay describing the removal of Terri's feeding tube as 'medical terrorism' (they love that t-word).

Ardent pro-life activist Randall Terry officially taking over as 'spokesperson' for the Schindlers at press conferences. At least you couldn't accuse the Schindlers of being mouthpieces anymore.

Republican Senate Majority Leader Dr. Bill Frist diagnosing Terri as "not in a vegetative state," contradicting Terri's physicians as well as several court-appointed doctors. His medical evidence? Videotaped footage of Terri.

The variety of macho Republican senators who stepped up to call Michael Schiavo a "coward" and "not a man". I was really hoping for Arnold to bust out the 'girly-man', but he unfortunately remained silent on the issue.

In what was the biggest highlight for me, a Congressional committee

issues a subpoena for Terri, ordering her to testify at a hearing at the hospice, thereby staying the order to remove the feeding tube. On the same day, Judge Greer denies the subpoena's request, and the feeding tube is removed for the third and final time.

Mimicking Jeb and the Florida legislature, George W. and his crazy cowboy Congress pass in an emergency session a 'Terri's Law v. 2' of equally dubious constitutional legality, allowing the Schindlers to take their case to the federal courts. The Schindlers, however, fare no better in the federal courts.

On March 31, with her hospice surrounded by a bizarre scene of hysterically praying pro-life activists, Terri dies of dehydration. We can at least take comfort in the fact that she did not suffer. Let's get one thing straight: Terry has not had a brain for 15 years. An article in the March 29 Toronto Star relates the medical facts of Terri's case. After dying due to lack of oxygen, 80% of her brain, including the frontal cortex, was removed as 'dead flesh' by her body's immune system and replaced with spinal fluid, a salty liquid. Terry was not 'brain dead', she had no brain. She was a lump of flesh.

The absurdity of the Schiavo case is bound to leave a bad taste in the mouth of even the most hardened cynic. Events like these just serve to remind us of the vast hypocrisy that surrounds us. The religious right, clamouring for a 'morality' that seeks to cling to every tiny scarp of 'life' in the name of a non-existent God, while simultaneously denying the rights of millions of homosexuals. The American president, notorious for his gunslinger-style approach to executions urging us to 'err on the side of life'. Is somebody yanking my feeding tube?

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by SBJ and KP



DIALOGUES AT THE LEGISLATURE

■■■ A visit to the Provincial Legislature yields informative results

On March 7 *Diatribes* visited the Ontario Provincial Legislature at Queen's Park in Toronto. We spoke to a variety of MPP's with regards to topics ranging from the separation of Church and State, street parties in Kingston, and of course, university funding and how it relates to the Coke Contract.

Here are some selections from the interviews.

Rosario Marchez- NDP



Marchez is the MPP for Trinity-Spadina and is the NDP's Critic of Education and Training.

On socialism-

***Diatribes*- Would you call yourself a democratic socialist or a social democracy?**

Marchez- I would say that I am a democratic socialist, but there aren't too many that will say that in the party. Most of them will say social democrat. Most of them don't understand the difference. There aren't too many who identify with socialism. It depends on the grounding that you've got, if you have some foundation for understanding. In university I studied French, English, and Philosophy. As soon as I started reading Marx and Lenin, well, you start taking positions, and realise that politics relates to you.

But it could've happened differently, I could have been influenced by different people, and I could've easily been a Liberal- it could have happened easily.

Do you think that you've been influenced by the right people?

It just happened that way. A friend of mine ran for city councillor, I helped him out, not as a New Democrat, but as a friend. It took a long time to understand what you stand for, and it's not easy. I didn't have a political position for a long time. It takes a while. But as I say, I could have become a Liberal depending on the influences that I had. Now I think my god, I would never become a Liberal (chuckles).

Do you think that democracy and capitalism are compatible?

Oh sure, why yes. Why shouldn't they be? I mean it's the best form for people to fight for greater participation and involvement. I think it's the best form, I mean, it's also a complicated form.

On the Coke Contract- Queen's has a five year exclusivity contract with Coke on campus, and there's been a lot of stir about it because Coke is perceived as an unethical company. What do you think about such contracts, and do you think they're justified because of funding imperatives?

New Democrats are not very receptive to these things. We've seen more and more corporate influence on universities. And universities that are not getting the kind of money that they need to get are obviously willing to reach out to the corporate sector and make deals with whomever. For that reason we're very concerned about some of the contracts that universities are making with whomever. And that's why we want access to the contracts, we want freedom of information, and right now universities are excluded from that.

On Norway, Sweden, and Denmark's socialist policies-

The lowest child poverty rates in the world is in the Nordic countries. Why is that? It's because there's money to take care of social needs. And they're working in a capitalist world. The argument that the corporate sector wants to make is 'if you do this you'll bid yourself out of existence because it's a globalized world and we won't be able to compete with anybody.' If you buy into that argument, we're lost as a society, because it then becomes a dog-eat-dog kind of Darwinian world. If you think that's okay, well alright, but from a Social Democratic point of view we think that is an ugly thing to leave to the market. The markets simply do not take care of people, the markets take care of themselves. They do not worry about people.

Do you believe in God?

No. I stopped believing when I was 13.

Do you call yourself an atheist?

(laughs) I stopped believing when I was 13.

John Gerretsen- Liberal



Gerretsen is Kingston's MPP and is the government's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

What do you think of the recent friction between students and residents during homecoming? Do you think that students have some sort of right to party?

We had major street parties when I was mayor of Kingston, I was mayor from '80 to '88 and it was a major problem and situation. It closed down University Ave. a number of times. There's an infamous picture of me coming from a fancy dinner in a tuxedo standing with the chief of police right at the corner of University and Johnson watching it all happen.

As for this year, [Kingston Police] chief had a lot to say about that, I generally support the chief. I thought that some of his comments may have been a little far out at the time but I mean he was dealing with a difficult situation at William and Aberdeen. You know what stopped it in the 80's was that a couple of letters from well-endowed alumni started appearing in the *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail*, saying that they would never give another penny if Queen's continued to allow this to happen. Then all of a sudden, you know, actions were taken whereby the thing basically stopped for many years.

I wasn't there that particular weekend so I can't tell you how bad it was but I can tell you that the vast majority of people in the city are totally supportive of the university and its students.

Look, there's spin but here's the reality: In a city the size of Kingston, it simply wouldn't be the way it is without the university. You never hear the downtown business community complain about students. With any kind of community with 15000 young people you're going to have some friction from time to time. And some of the students have very legitimate concerns.



New Democrat Rosario Marchez discusses capitalism and democracy

Continues on Page 5

LEGISLATURE

Continued from Page 4

On homelessness in Kingston- What about the homeless problem in Kingston? What do you see as potential solutions to that problem?

You know it's the kind of situation that every politician pontificates about, you know, 'something should be done', this that or the other thing but in a lot of cases I just don't know what it's going to take.

I think part of the problem with the homeless situation anywhere is that it's more of an affordability problem. We don't have a housing shortage; we have a shortage of people having the income to actually get the housing. It's an income problem. So the question is how do you get the money into the pockets of the people that really need it, that to me is the much larger issue.

Do you believe in God?

Do I believe in God? I believe in a superior being, and that exhibits itself in a number of different ways. I think there's something a lot bigger than this right now.

Do your religious beliefs ever influence how you conduct politics?

I think people's whole life experience plays a role in the political decision making process. I wouldn't say I make all my decisions based on a Catholic creed or some sort of religion, no.

Do you think it would be wrong to make decisions based on a creed?

Ah, I think maybe to a certain extent. I guess as long as whatever you do, you do for everyone, that's a fair part of the political decision making process.

Premier Dalton McGuinty- Liberal



Do you believe in God?

Yes.

Do your religious beliefs influence how you conduct politics?

Yes, well I think in terms of broad-

brush values. But I think it's important to establish a clear separation between precepts of your faith and what you believe is in the public interest. For example, we were proud to introduce legislation that will enable same-sex couples to get married. I think that's in keeping with our values as Ontarians but not something that's supported by my religion, but it's important to establish that distinction. You're here to represent all the people Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, Catholics, Christians and alike.

Mary Anne Chambers- Liberal



Chambers is the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and represents Scarborough East.

On accessibility to post-secondary education-

We feel that we need to address certain population, for example low-income families. We know that when we look at students in low-income families vs. students in mid- or high-income families were talking about 17% vs. 47% in post-secondary education. We also know that there are some social determinants in terms of debt. We also know that over past decade student assistance has declined by 400 million at same time tuition was rising by 130%.

On the Coke contract-

Queen's has a five year exclusivity contract with Coke on campus, and there's been a lot of stir about it because Coke is perceived as an unethical company. What do you think about such contracts, and do you think they're justified because of funding imperatives?

Coca-Cola is viewed as an unethical corporation?

Yeah (cites alleged union abuses in Columbia, alleged environmental harms caused in India) Do you think that this is justified? It is just kind of a response to the funding imperatives that come as a result of the government's cuts.

I think it's important to recognize that no sector stands on its own. So I think that to be able to establish relationships with the private sector can be very

healthy as long as it's ensured that it doesn't compromise the objectives or the values of the public sector partner. I think that students have the rights and the ability to have a strong influence over what the administration pursues. There are ways to ensure that your interests are protected.

Do you think it's possible for corporations to invest in universities without having interests that may come into conflict with the university's?

I'm saying that universities and colleges should make sure that their interests are well-protected. One of their interests might be another source of revenue. That's okay. But it shouldn't compromise the other interests that they have. So I would say it's up to the universities to protect themselves in that regard.

Not up to the government?

Your universities are very smart, I don't think they want government involved in everything, I don't think that taxpayers can pay for government to be involved in everything. Government has a role to play in funding of public institutions but you have to remember that that's just one aspect of funding. There's absolutely no reason why the private sector should not participate in the funding of colleges and universities because they're major beneficiaries of the graduates of those universities.

Do you believe in God?

Yes.

Are you a member of any particular faith?

I'm Catholic

Do your religious beliefs influence how you conduct politics?

I would say that my respect for values, the religious values that I support no doubt have an influence in how I treat

other people and how I interact with other people. I also represent my constituents interests and I try to listen to all point of views.

Peter Kormos- NDP



Kormos is the NDP's Labour and Justice critic, and represents the riding of Niagara Centre.

On truth in politics-

Let me tell you something. Politics has become, in my view, as much as anything else all about the art of lying. Outright lying. The strange thing about Queen's Park or any other provincial legislature is that it is against the rules to call somebody a liar but it's not against the rules to lie. Can you appreciate the irony in that? Lying has become part of the culture. Some people call it, apologetically, spin. It's really an embarrassing level of dishonesty.

Do you believe in God?

I haven't thought about that for a long time. I was raised Catholic, and I still consider myself a member of that denomination.

Do your religious beliefs ever influence how you conduct politics?

No. I'm a big believer in render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and render unto God what belongs to him or her.



Premier Dalton McGuinty shares a laugh with some Queen's students

THE WARD CHURCHILL CONTROVERSY

■■■ *Diatribes* investigates the cloud of uncertainty surrounding Professor Ward Churchill

The recent controversy surrounding Professor Ward Churchill has raised difficult questions about the limits of academic freedom.

A radical paper that he wrote shortly after 9/11 has had many critics arguing as to which side of the limit of free-speech he falls on. Political pressure for his dismissal has raised the issue of the government's role towards publicly-funded universities.

In the ensuing events, accusations of fraud and deception were made with regard to Churchill's published works and his claimed Native American heritage. This has raised the question as to the circumstances under which professors should be stripped of tenure. Churchill, the former head of Ethnic Studies at University of Colorado-Boulder, originally had the essay published in late 2001. In "Some People Push Back," he writes,

"The building [the Pentagon] and those inside comprised military targets, pure and simple. As to those in the World Trade Center . . . Well, really. Let's get a grip here, shall we? True enough, they were civilians of a sort. But innocent? Gimme a break. They formed a technocratic corps at the very heart of America's global financial empire--the "mighty engine of profit" to which the military dimension of U.S. policy has always been enslaved--and they did so both willingly and knowingly. . . . If there was a better, more effective, or in fact any other way of visiting some penalty befitting their participation upon the little Eichmanns inhabiting the sterile sanctuary of the twin towers, I'd really be interested in hearing about it."

The essay was not widely known until January 2005, when Churchill was invited to speak at New York's Hamilton College and the College's newspaper reported his remarks about 9/11. Within days, Churchill and his essay had become a national news story.

As pundits argued over Churchill's right to free speech and Colorado governor Bill Owens (R) called for his dismissal, journalists began an investigation of the professor's writings and interviews and found that he has long been a figure of controversy.

Although Churchill does not have Ph.D. (he received a Bachelor's and Master's from the obscure Sangamon State University in Illinois), he won a lecturer position in 1978 at Colorado U, he received tenure there in 1991, and until recently he has received a yearly salary of \$94 000.

On his applications for the lecturer position and for tenure, he included a federal affirmative action form on which he stated

that he is a Native American. Although his university apparently never looked into it, Churchill's claims of aboriginal ancestry are rather dubious. In public, Churchill typically wears a buckskin coat and a beaded headband; he has said that he is a member of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees.

Yet, on February 11, Chad Smith, principal chief of the 250 000 member Cherokee nation, said that there is no evidence that Churchill is Cherokee (*LA Times* 2/12/05).

On its web site, the Grand Council of the American Indian Movement states that "Churchill has fraudulently represented himself as an Indian, and a member of the American Indian Movement, a situation that has lifted him into the position of a lecturer on Indian activism."

In recent weeks, Churchill has been undermined by further claims of fraud. In



a 1987 Denver Post interview, Churchill spoke about his paratrooper training and his years as part of an elite reconnaissance patrol in Vietnam. The racist insults he endured in the Army, he revealed, fuelled his activism.

However, after requesting his military records from the government, Paul DeMain of *News From Indian Country* found that Churchill had been trained as a light-truck driver and film projectionist and that he had served less than a year in Vietnam.

Churchill has also been accused of creating a mirror image of a copyrighted painting by the late aboriginal artist Thomas Mails and then selling it as his own. Churchill has yet to provide evidence supporting his claim that he always acknowledged that his painting was an homage, and Mails's son believes that Churchill violated copyright.

What may ultimately cost Churchill his job are accusations of bad scholarship and

plagiarism. In "Bringing the Law Back Home" (*Indians Are Us?* 1994), Churchill states that the US Army intentionally spread smallpox among Natives in 1830s North Dakota, resulting in 120 000 deaths.

To support his argument, Churchill cites one source: Russell Thorton's *American Indian Holocaust and Survival* (1987); however, Thorton's book says nothing about the US Army having a role in the smallpox epidemic and stipulates that 20 to 30 thousand Natives died. Dr. Thorton, a Cherokee, told the *Los Angeles Times* (2/12/05), "I think people can make mistakes in quotations occasionally, but to blatantly misrepresent someone else's work is totally inappropriate."

Dr. Fay Cohen of Dalhousie University charges that Churchill plagiarized one of her articles. Dalhousie spokesperson Charles Crosby has stated that "the article . . . is, in the opinion of our legal counsel,

plagiarism" (*Rocky Mountain News* 3/11/05). Cohen further alleges that when she initially accused Churchill of plagiarism, he threatened her with violence.

Churchill not only denies the threat but also claims he was not the sole author of the disputed article ("Usual and Accustomed Places," *The State of Native America*, 1992)--though he would not name his collaborators.

In *Wicazo Sa Review* 251 (1999), Professor John LaVelle identifies what he believes are three additional instances of plagiarism in Churchill's writings; Churchill has yet to address the charge.

In February, Churchill stepped down from his position, and the University Board of Regents launched an investigation to determine if he should be dismissed. The results of the probe are still pending, but on March 26, Churchill told a crowd of supporters that he will not apologize for the essay and that he will not cooperate with his University's investigation of his

record. It now appears that the Regents will fault Churchill not for his 9/11 statements but for the academic fraud and that, to resolve the situation, Colorado U will buy out his contract for a large sum.

Some observers of the Churchill controversy lament the fact that the charges of fraud have to a large degree obscured what they think should be the main issue of the debate: the merits of Churchill's view of 9/11 and his right to express that view. Churchill's supporters, as well as many of his detractors, believe that punishing him for his essay would constitute an abridgement of free speech--we have academic freedom so that people can, without fear of persecution, voice controversial opinions.

On the other hand, those in favour of Churchill's dismissal argue that speech is already limited on campuses, at least for non-leftists: writer Don Feder points out, "Imagine, for a moment, that the professor wrote an essay in which he observed: 'We should have used nuclear weapons on Iraq. Muslims are a blight on the planet. The fewer of them, the better.' In such a case, there would be no resolutions, no investigations, no please to let-every-voice-be-heard. Instead, Churchill would have been summarily dismissed--after he was flogged, keelhauled, and tarred-and-feathered" (*Front Page* 2/11/05).

One aspect of the story that the mainstream press has largely ignored is the question of just how heterodox Churchill really is (the press constantly refers to him as a "rogue" professor). Many pundits have maintained that, in the context of academia, Churchill is simply expressing the orthodox view--it's just that, in making the Nazi comparison, he is using stronger language than like-minded professors do. 'Neoliberal' academics, they say, routinely make the argument that the United States and its current enemies are morally equivalent and that 9/11 should be seen as an understandable, inevitable, and probably just consequence of 'American foreign policy.'

Whether or Churchill's views are the exception or the norm in academia, his case has prompted legislators and journalists to scrutinize universities as they never have before. If Churchill loses his job over the charges of academic fraud (and he most certainly should, if those allegations are proven), then it is possible that the battle over free speech may be deferred to another day. However, it seems that this case has opened a proverbial can of worms, and if the media scrutiny of the academy persists even after Churchill fades from the scene, then universities may feel compelled to reform their policies on hiring and on academic freedom. And of course, this leads to another question: what would be the precise nature of such reforms?

OPINIONS

A FEW PARTING WORDS OF WISDOM

■■■ Catherine Shea waxes nostalgic about her glory days at Queen's

It all started when I was 5 years old. Being 5 years old is a big year for a child - I started the first grade and was officially a "big kid". That was the same year that my sister started her English degree at Queen's and I began spending all of my March breaks and summer holidays hanging out around Kingston and the Queen's campus.

- I played my first beer bottle cap game at age 5 in the hallways of Vic Hall. I went to my first St. Patrick's day keg party at age 6 and I thought everyone was drinking lime Koolaid. I remember a time before Stauffer Library and when the Goat was a new little place in town. I put a Spice Girl's poster up in my brother-in-law's Watson Hall office when I was in the ninth grade and I thought he was the coolest Ph.D student. Then I did something I vowed to never do - I came to Queen's myself to get the real experience. Now after 8 degrees and an 18 year run, the Shea children are checking out of Queen's.

"At Queen's, you can look to your left and look to your right and you will see a very intelligent and motivated person - and you can't do that at any other Canadian university," are the exact words that my sister said to me when I asked her about why I should consider Queen's. These are the same words that have repeatedly gone through my head and still do today when I think about how I ended up in this much unexpected position I am in. These are also the words I will tell people when I'm asked the same question.

My time Queen's has left me in a state of crisis now when facing the reality of leaving in a month. Unlike most people who hate Kingston and its charms, I love Kingston and am trying to squeeze 4 years of my favourite activities into one last month. Although I'm very sad to leave, I'd rather leave still wanting more and longing to come back. The "Queen's Experience" cannot be summarized, but I have a few suggestions to make your time at Queen's a true "experience".

Stay for the Summer

It's hard to imagine Kingston stress-free but it's really a great place. If you're lucky, you can score a cushy research job on campus and spend your lunches eating by the water prior to your afternoon nap! But seriously, this is also great for getting to know professors and other moti-

Take Courses in Other Faculties

Not every faculty on Queen's is the same. I'm in commerce and have taken courses in Arts, Science, and Engineering, and I wish I had taken more electives. I would especially recommend that everyone take commerce courses because they are so applicable to anything that you



vated students at Queen's in a more relaxed setting, and to pursue an academic passion. Summer employees also get to go the Principal's barbeque and get chances to participate in many research studies to not only get paid for doing menial tasks, but to also learn about and advance research at Queen's.

Study in Strange Places

No one really studies at the library. It took me a long time to figure that out. Try places like Mac-Corry in the classrooms, the cafeteria, or the study room. Join a club, if for nothing else, to get office space on campus and then study there. If Diatribe has taught you nothing else, Stauffer is good for one thing only.

do (group work and presentations) and then you'll also realize that we're not as bad as people tend to think we are!

Go to Guest Lectures

Queen's attracts many great speakers that put on guest lectures free of charge. They are usually listed in the Queen's Gazette and on the Queen's News Centre of the website. When else will you get to see a world expert on a subject? This makes a Queen's education all the more valuable and you will get to interact with some great people.

Make Friends with your Opposite

Sometime I wonder why my friends are actually friends with me because we could not be

more different. But those friendships are the most valuable as I'm constantly learning about the other person and their points of view. A good rule of thumb is if you don't know both a vegan and a self-proclaimed capitalist you have yet to expand your social circle enough.

Get Involved

This is a great way to meet new people who share your interests and to apply some of your education to a real-life setting. There's something for everyone and you may just stumble upon a new passion.

Play Pranks on your Friends

This is what student life is all about - procrastination. True friends plaster each other's houses with porn at 4:30am or bake vulgar gingerbread men for "classy" parties. Nothing is more time consuming and gratifying than good old fashion pranks.

Publish Something

There are many newspapers and publications on campus. If you don't like an article in the Journal, let them know. If you write poetry submit it to the publications. University is about refining and developing opinions and talents and this is the easiest way to do so.

Go Out A Lot

Don't be the big nerd who stays in on Friday night to study. Half of the experience of university comes outside of academics. And surprisingly those with the highest marks tend to be the ones who go out the most. Don't be afraid to make a fool out of yourself dancing or making out on the stage at AJ's or by singing karaoke extremely off-tune. No one remembers chapter 5 in calculus, but everyone remembers a great karaoke performance!

Study A Lot Too

We are here to get an education. Don't discount your academic potential by partying too hard and by studying too much. It's all about work-life balance and studying properly.

I'll see you all at Homecoming. I'll be the one dancing on the stage.

WHAT IS IT TO BE FREE?

■ ■ ■ The difference between conservative and liberal conceptions of free-will

by **Matt Aikins**

At the heart of the perennial debate between right-wing conservative and left-wing liberal lies a conflict over what constitutes human free-will. Indeed I believe that many the differences between liberal and conservative policies can be understood in terms of how their contending notions of free-will affect their perceptions of the issues involved. Consider:

A farmer lives on the outskirts of town, which is ten miles away. The farmer does not have a car, and must use her horse to get into town, which takes 5 hours. The nearest poll on Voting Day is in the town. Is the farmer as free to vote as someone who lives in the town?

One could argue that the farmer is less free because the cost to her of voting (10 hours) is much higher than the cost for a townsman. No one is actually physically preventing her from voting, but the higher cost surely makes it harder for her to vote. This is borne out by the fact that people in her position are less likely to vote. Her free-will is 'limited'.

On the other hand, one could note that the farmer certainly *could* have voted. The farmer understood that she could physically get up and go vote. Surely if she chose not to go to the town to vote she could not turn around and claim that it was not her fault, that she was compelled to. Without any exterior coercion we are able to do what we want-- our free-will is 'perfect' in these situations.

The conservative idea of free-will as 'perfect' leads to an emphasis on personal responsibility and an acceptance of adversarial methods of social relation. The liberal idea of free-will as 'limited' leads to an emphasis on the role of systems and institutions in determining our actions, and thus diffuses the concept of 'personal blame'. As a result liberals tend to have a more sympathetic attitude towards crime. Because both ideologies have radically differing notions of free-will, synthesis between the two viewpoints is often impossible. We are left with a seemingly 'either/or' situation. The upshot of this is that any particular philosophical understanding of free-will is going to have profound implications for liberal and conservative ideologies. Furthermore, if there was a correct understanding of free-will, this understanding might even solve the opposition between the two ideologies. Whether or not any such correct understanding exists, or even can exist, is a matter of intense philosophical debate.

Is there any one who does not desire freedom? Or perhaps it would be better put this way-- is freedom always a good thing? The second question seems more ambiguous than the first. We should always want to be free, right? And yet certainly we should want there to be limits on the freedoms of others. What is it, exactly, to be free?

Freedom is not a clear concept. Philosophy does not have a clear idea of

freedom. Let me give you an example: according to science, everything happens for a reason: a cause. A ball falls because of gravitational forces. The seasons change according to the laws of planetary motion. Should we imagine our brains as any different? Are they not connected to the physical matter of our bodies? Are the atoms that comprise us any different from the atoms that comprise the ball? If we smoke marijuana, the chemical reaction in our brain changes our state of consciousness- this is an ironclad causal relationship. These sorts of idea would seem to imply that our actions are predetermined according to their causes- we would not be free to break the physical laws that govern existence,

Yet certainly there is something that distinguishes us from balls and planets. We are conscious, and we are apparently conscious of our own free will. The experience of choosing is an intrinsic aspect of human existence-- we could not imagine existing apart from it. Certainly we are (usually) able to choose what we want. Are we then free to choose what we want? Well yes, surely! And yet do we not choose according to our desires? Are we free to choose whether or not we eat? We are certainly not free to choose whether we desire to eat. Did any of us have anything to do with the fact that we enjoy watching hockey, and thus choose to watch hockey?

As you can see, questions begin to pile up rapidly at an insurmountable rate. But don't be ashamed if you're vexed by them-- the greatest philosophers throughout history have grappled unsuccessfully with the dilemma of human freedom in the face of a deterministic, rational universe. There is a contradiction between the idea that effects always have causes (determinism) and the idea that we can choose our own actions (free-will). It seems impossible that both could exist. Yet both are equally necessary for us to be able to understand the world.

Determinism underpins all of our scientific knowledge. All our social sciences assume certain regularities to human behaviour. Humans act the same in similar situations. Yet if we are acting according to these 'laws', where is our free-will?

Even quantum physics, with its introduction of true randomness, is still deterministic in a certain sense. For though an electron may be 60% likely to be in one area (I'm grossly oversimplifying the idea of probability fields) and 40% likely to be in another area, and though we are not able to say that its specific location is determined, its probability of 60-40 is still determined. In any case, the presence of truly random events neither accounts nor allows for free-will. If some of our actions are truly random, then we cannot be said to be choosing them.

On the other hand, it is not even possible to think about morality without a

concept of free-will. How can we deserve guilt or praise for actions which we have no control over? If there is to be any talk of right or wrong, then we must have some sense that we are capable of choosing these things. And while it is difficult to logically vocalize, there is no denying that we directly experience choice and free-will everyday, that they feel as real as the sun shining above us. Immanuel Kant argued that, while free-will might seem impossible according to our best understanding of causal reality, we must still 'have faith' in our own free-will in order to act. Free-will is a 'necessary assumption' for any human action, for how could we conceive of consciously acting if our actions were dictated by forces that are external to us? Nevertheless, Kant's 'metaphysical shoulder-shrug' does little to resolve the paradox of free-will and determinism.

I hope it has become apparent how profoundly confusing the issue of human free-will is. We are stuck between the two contradictory poles of 'perfect' free-will and ironclad determinism, unable to reconcile the two but equally unable to abandon either of them.

Where do conservative and liberal conceptions of free-will fit within this scheme? The conservative conception of free-will views human freedom in the negative sense. We are free so long as there are no external, coercive constraints on our actions. This is a 'perfect' conception of freedom-human freedom is perfect so long as it is left alone.

Such a conception of freedom jibes well with the conservative emphasis on personal responsibility. If, being free, we alone are responsible for our actions then we should bear the full brunt of their consequences. Note that in our society it is generally conservatives who advocate for tougher prison sentences for criminal offenders.

The conservative concept of 'perfect' freedom also plays a role in legitimizing advertising and the free-market. Companies are justified in plastering ads all over public places because, after all, it's still your (perfectly free) choice as to whether or not you purchase their product. In the same vein, if people are free-willed then any non-coerced market transaction must be mutually beneficial for both parties, for otherwise why would choose to engage in it?

On a fascinating side note, the conservative definition of free-will is also the definition of free-will required by many of the world's major religions, especially Christianity. If humans were not perfectly free, then how could we be held responsible for our sins? Would not God instead be to blame for them? Indeed, how could God be called 'just' if not everyone is equally free to be 'good' or achieve salvation? In the US particularly, conservatism and religiousness tend to go hand in hand. It's interest to note how

their concepts of free-will buttress each other.

'Perfect' free-will thus underpins many of the policies associated with conservatism. In the same sense the liberal conception of free-will provide justification for many of the policies associated with left-wing ideology. The liberal conception of free-will is much more limited than the conservative one. It occupies a position closer to determinism-what social sciences call a more 'structuralist' approach to understanding human behaviour.

Liberals believe that the structures and institutions in society have a great deal of impact on the choices we make. We are not perfectly free to determine our own actions. Instead our actions are often influenced by the world in which we exist. Our poverty might make us more likely to steal, for example, and therefore a rich person is freer to avoid stealing than a poor person. Thus the liberal conception of free-will places a great deal of emphasis on understanding and controlling the power structures of society, rather than individuals.

The liberal notion of free-will also underlies criticisms of advertising. If advertising, due to its psychological manipulation through association and subconscious stimuli, causes us to desire to products, then it is infringing on our free-will. The more advertising we're subjected to, the more our free-will is infringed upon- it simply can't be helped. Furthermore, transactions in the free-market are not automatically justified under the liberal conception of free-will. Because our free-will can be limited even if we are not being physically coerced, we might engage in transactions that are less our choice than the result of exterior forces that we are subject to, such as advertising.

Understanding these differing conceptions of free-will enables to understand why the debate between liberals and conservatives is often so intractable. Behind the opposing specifics of policy details lies a fundamental divide over the basic nature of human existence. A disagreement between ontological claims, to put it philosophically.

It's not as if there are two separate definitions of 'free-will', and that both could in fact be right. The two concepts make overlapping claims about the actual nature of human existence. Moreover, there are normative implications attached 'free-will'-very often our sentiments of moral approbation depend on whether or not 'free-will' is involved.

The interesting implication of all this is that a better philosophical understanding of the concept of 'free-will' could possibly resolve many of the differences between conservatives and liberals, perhaps by pointing out who's wrong, or perhaps by illuminating alternates to the 'perennial' debate.

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LOVE IS SO SHORT, AND OBLIVION SO LONG

■■■ We should honour Justin's memory by committing ourselves to non-violence
by **Matt Aikins**

There aren't too many of us at Queen's who haven't been affected in some way by Justin Schweg's tragic death. Whether we knew him as a friend, knew of him through friends, or merely listened to the melancholy keening of the bagpipes leading his memorial procession, we've all felt a touch of existential sadness in these past few days.

In the mute gasping agony that follows such sudden and senseless departures we are left struggling for explanations. On a certain level no answers can possibly forthcoming—why indeed is it our lot to suffer and die in this world? Yet we must not shy away from the self-examination that such tragedies can induce. I believe that we should all take a very long and critical look at the factors that led to Justin's death—the culture of drunken violence that hums just beneath the surface of every night out on the town that we enjoy. We must ask ourselves if our own actions implicitly support this culture, and if so what we might do to change it to prevent future tragedies.

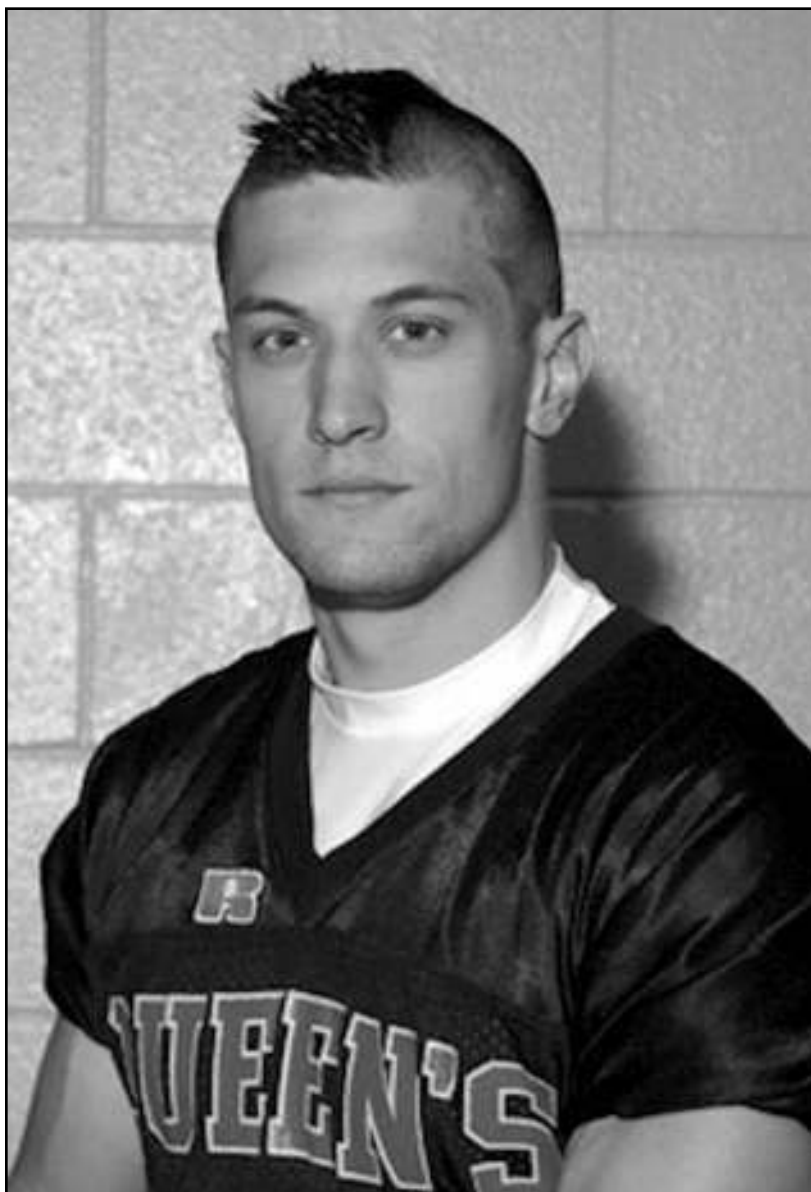
I do not wish to suggest that Justin was in any way responsible for his fate. I didn't know Justin. I don't know what happened that night in AJ's, but certainly nothing could ever justify the callous and brutal way in which he was murdered. Yet these sorts of incidents do n't occur in isolation from their social context. We can't simply blame his killer and leave it at that. As uncomfortable as it might make us, we should examine our own involvements in the sort of party-scene violence that Justin was a victim of.

I know a lot of guys here at Queen's who think it's kind of cool and 'tough' to fight. I used to be one of them. The idea of 'sticking up for yourself', of 'kicking someone's ass' are deeply connected to our ideas of masculinity. No one wants to be a 'pussy'. No one wants to be seen as backing down. No one wants to 'take any shit'.

I know a few guys who actually enjoy fighting. Get a few beers in them and they'll go out looking for a fight. No one really

gets hurt too bad, and hey, if the other guys are willing then it's fair game right?

Every night I go out I watch people get progressively rowdier and more aggressive. By the end of the night people are usually kicking over trashcans and smashing furniture on Aberdeen. Oh, I agree that violence against inanimate objects is completely different from



violence against other human beings. While it's kind of stupid, there's nothing inherently wrong with destroying property, unless of course it belongs to someone else (which it usually does). But I think that a lot of the property destruction that you see out at night is a manifestation of other, less pleasant violent urges in us, urges that can be quickly turned against human beings.

At every really big party there's usually one or two fights a night. I've been involved in a couple in the past, and I've even found them exhilarating at the time. Of course those caveman instincts in you get turned on by the whole process. That's evolution. But when we stop to think about it,

when I stopped to think about it, I realized how incredibly selfish and irrational violence is. What do we ever prove by beating up the other guy? Our honour? Our toughness? To me it seems a thousand times more honourable and tough to ignore social pressure and embarrassment, to turn the other cheek and avoid a violent and ugly confrontation. Avoid hurting another human being,

a broken bottle by another girl in the AJ's bathroom. Nobody is immune from this sort of casual, impersonal violence.

So you're pissed off at some jerk. So you're sexually frustrated. So you're cocky and you just don't give a fuck. But think for a moment about the act of violence-- it involves forcing pain onto another human being. Does that make you proud? If that isn't enough to stop you, think about Justin, think about how easily an innocent human life can be snatched away in the blink of an eye, simply because emotions ran out of control.

When I think about Justin I am reminded of a very good friend of mine, one of my best. I've long admired this dude, and I've grown with him since first-year. Together we've kind of picked our way through the confusing demands of modern masculinity-- from our attitudes towards women to our notions of about physical violence. Last year this friend's close friend from high school was shot to death outside of a club in Oshawa. The experience affected him powerfully. While not an aggressive guy, my friend had never been the type to back down, and he had never been the type to refuse the demands of 'honour'. Now, since his friend's death, my friend has scrupulously avoided physical conflict. He doesn't give a shit if he's seen as a 'pussy'. He does his best to get his friends out of potentially violent confrontations, playing the role of the smiley-faced peacemaker if need be. I think his friend's death taught him the utter triviality of 'manliness' and 'honour' in the face of the precariousness of life.

I hope that Justin's death has a similar effect on anyone who knew him. Violence is something that we are all complicit in if we condone it, if we laugh at it, if even we turn our heads to look the other way. If you loved Justin, let his death inspire you to re-evaluate your notions of 'honour' and 'masculinity'. In this way future incidents like this might be prevented.

As Pablo Neruda put it, 'love is so short/ and oblivion so long.'

even in the face of social ridicule. That, I believe, takes a courage far truer than any fighter's.

We should never engage in physical violence unless it's in self-defence. Fighting at bars and parties should not be a 'sport' or form of entertainment. The next time we see a fight break out we should not crowd around and egg the participants on. We should express our disgust and disapproval and do our best to defuse the situation. We need to remove every trace of admiration from our attitudes towards fighting and physical violence.

This applies to girls too. Just a few weeks before Justin's death a girl was brutally stabbed with

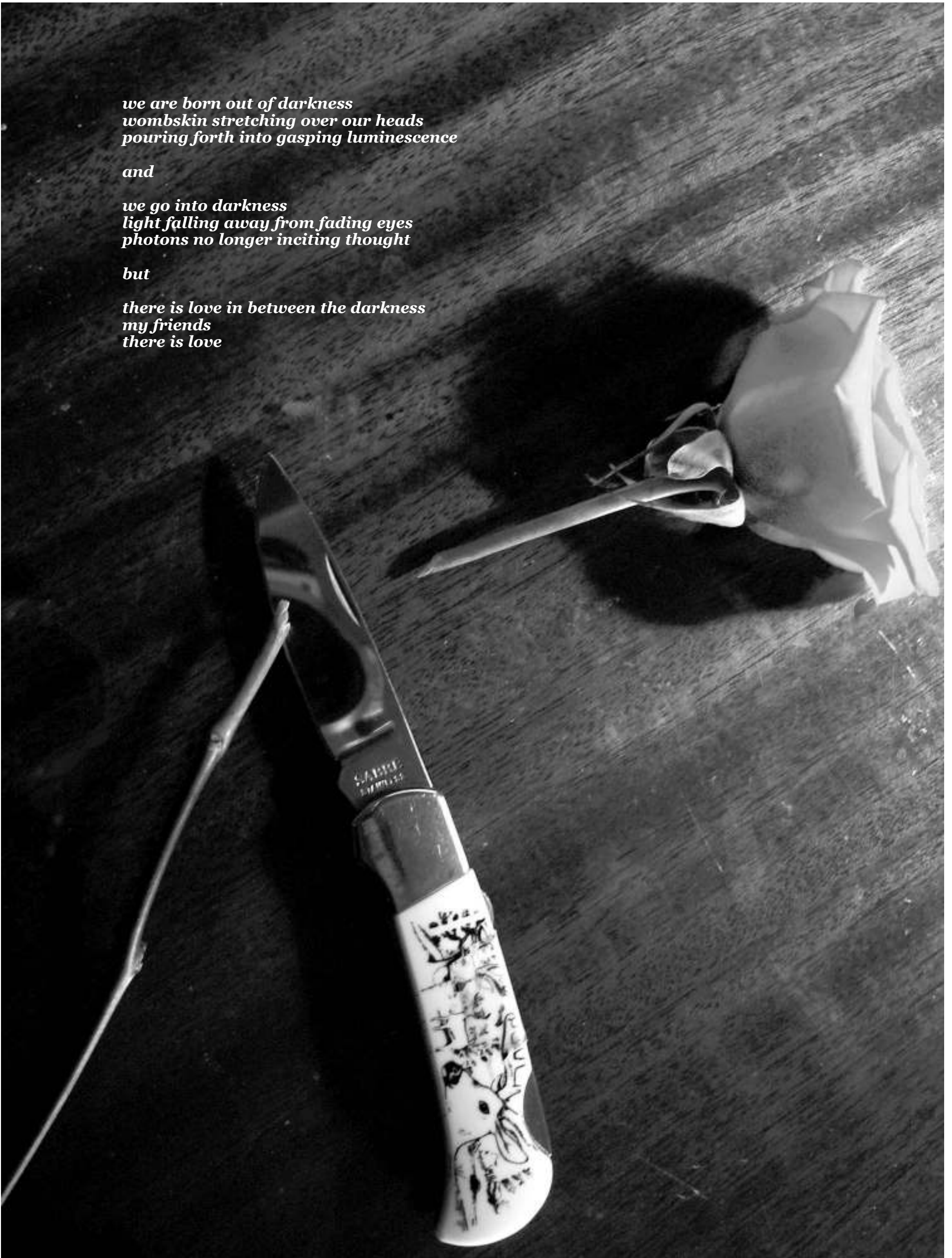
*we are born out of darkness
wombskin stretching over our heads
pouring forth into gasping luminescence*

and

*we go into darkness
light falling away from fading eyes
photons no longer inciting thought*

but

*there is love in between the darkness
my friends
there is love*



ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

THESE PLAYERS KNOW HOW TO ROCK

■■■ Matt Aikins reviews 'Gump, Rice, and three times a Lady Di' by the Queen's Players

Queen's Players is a crazy, sexed-up, drunked-up rockin' machine that doesn't know why, how, or when to quit.

And why should they? The theatre troupe has been around since 1900 and shows no sign of letting up. Previous members have included Robertson Davies and Lorne Greene, though it's doubtful that either ever chugged beers onstage.

The Players have been celebrated by some as one of the best live entertainment acts all year, and panned by others as a bunch of drunken hacks repeating tired penis jokes to an even more drunken audience. After seeing two performances, one at Alfie's, one at Clark Hall, I think there's truth in both statements.

One thing you'll immediately notice about a Players show is that it's a party. People get up on their chairs and dance, make-out, rock-out, and generally act-out. Alfie's was somewhat similar to a full-fledged riot, and by the end of the Clark Hall show audience members were actually on the stage, knocking over microphone stands with their drunken flailings. Fuelling this chaos was an incredibly skilled and funkadelic Players band. What show lacks in coherent plot lines or serious acting talent it makes up for in raw energy and musical ability.

All Queen's Players shows following the same format, consisting of a half-hearted plot that loosely binds together a bunch of celebrity-parodying characters who take turns giving musical performances and delivering the sometimes witty, more often crude, one-liners.

The show absolutely dripped with sexuality. The players seemed to exude it from their pores and the audience at front couldn't keep their hands off of them-- heck, I noticed that backstage the Players could barely keep their hands off each other. The most raging hormones of the evening surely belonged to Michael Yerxa, who played a Marty McFly so gay that he issued a 'gay disclaimer' at the beginning of the show. Yerxa seemed to be revelling in his sexuality that night,



making out with three different random (straight?) guys from the crowd and proudly announcing, "I'm gonna fuck a dude tonight!"

The show also featured a great deal of mind-twisting imagery, the filthiest being the lascivious, lollipop-licking little girl Shirley Temple, played by Veronica Graham. I have never experienced such a sudden, disconcerting juxtaposition of personalities as when Graham went from pip-squeaky tipsy jailbait to throaty-toned blues goddess in a matter of seconds as she stepped out of character at the beginning of her song, yanking off her candy-blonde wig to reveal an unruly

mass of auburn curls. 'Ooooo I've been a baaad baaad girl' sang Graham, growling her way into the musical highlight of the evening, a jazz-soaked version of Fiona Apple's 'Criminal'. Sweet sassy molasses...

The Players are known for pushing the limits of decency, and this show was no exception. Lines like "do you think I can snort coke off my own dick, doc?" abounded. At one point Condoleeza Rice announced she was going to "moisten her vagina with malt liquor", and at another point she actually fed said liquor to a young Shirley Temple.

The show's risqué lyrics did land them in hot water with the Social Issues Commission. Pressure eventually led to a rather tame line about "rocking you like a tsunami" being dropped. The commission was apparently tipped off by disgruntled StuCons, with whom Queen's Players director Sheanna Beau James says there's been issues with in the past.

"There's been tension between Players and the StuCons. It didn't help being narc'd on by them," James says.

In fact, James says that, partially because of the difficulties with StuCons, this season was probably the last time that Players will perform at Alfie's.

"The likelihood of going back to Alfie's is slim to none. We've all had bad experiences with Alfie's. Maybe we'll take two weeks at Clark, we're used to the SciCons there, they're more laid back."



If you like great music, lewd humour, drunkenness, and general partying, then I recommend the Players. I had a blast at both shows, and was soaked in beer and sweat by the end of them. But if you're not so much into getting doused in liquids and you're looking for high-brow theatre, then you'd best take a pass.



I LIVE IN A WORLD TOO SMALL FOR ME

■■■ Book review: Stan Lee & Jack Kirby, *The Essential Fantastic Four Volume One*
by Timothy Drake

Comic books, for generations the ugly stepchild of pop culture, have never been more respectable. The chain bookstores now boast large 'graphic novel' sections, where shoppers can pick up everything from Chester Brown's *Louis Riel* to *The Best of Superman*. The syllabi for university literature courses regularly include Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer prize-winning graphic novel *Maus*. Michael Chabon, another Pulitzer winner, and Alvin Sargent, an Oscar winner, wrote the screenplay for *Spider-Man 2*, which was not only last summer's highest grossing picture but also one of its most critically praised. Fox hopes to emulate *Spider-Man*'s success when it releases the long awaited *Fantastic Four* film on July 8. To help promote the film, Marvel Comics has re-released *The Essential Fantastic Four Volume One*, an inexpensive black-and-white trade paperback collecting the first twenty issues of what its co-creator Stan Lee, with his usual immodesty, long ago dubbed 'the world's greatest comic magazine.' Hyperbole to be sure, but it cannot be denied that *The Fantastic Four* had a pivotal role in the emergence of comic books as a legitimate literary form.

Strangely enough, *The Fantastic Four* came about in large part because a thirty-eight year old self-described hack writer, embarrassed by his industry and by his contributions to it, wanted a new job. Stanley Lieber began working as an office-boy for Timely Comics when he was still a teenager. Schlock magazine publisher Martin Goodman had formed Timely in 1939 to cash in on the success of Superman. Although Goodman had some success with the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner characters, his first big hit came in 1941 with *Captain America Comics*, created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. Simon and Kirby soon left the company, though, and Goodman decided to make Lieber, his wife's second cousin, his editor and head writer. After World War II, Timely, which would go through numerous name changes in the 1950s, largely abandoned superheroes, adopting a simple but unfortunate publishing strategy: if another company found success with a particular genre, Timely would flood the market with inferior imitations. Using the pseudonym "Stan Lee" (he decided to save his real name for the novels he planned to write), Lieber spent almost twenty years scripting forgettable comics about gun-fighters, mutated monsters, soldiers, fashion models, hard-boiled detectives, and funny animals--comics that were drawn by illustrators who could not find work at the industry leader, National, the publisher of Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman. By 1960, the comics division of Goodman's company was in such sorry shape that it had only three full-time employees and no official name. When National scored a hit in 1960 with *Justice League of America*, a superhero team featuring the company's top characters,

Goodman ordered Lee to produce a knock-off. Lee, who was having some success writing for humor magazines and who still dreamed of becoming a great novelist, decided that the super-team project would be his final comic. To draw it, he chose Kirby. After *Captain America*, Kirby's career had followed a singular pattern: he would help develop a comic book genre and soon move on to something new. Kirby always eschewed imitation, even self-imitation. In 1961, several years

Sue and Mr. Fantastic (Reed Richards) are engaged (later in the series, they marry and have a son). The odd man out is Reed's best friend Ben Grimm, who is also the book's most important character. The space flight mishap that has given the others wondrous powers has transformed Ben into a grotesque orange creature. In his first line in #1, Ben rages, "Bah, everywhere is the same! I live in a world too small for me!" His greatest desire is to become human again. Lee initially

took the chance of violating the medium's accepted rules of characterization because he felt he had nothing to lose--after all, in 1961, he was ready to leave comics for good.

Neither Lee nor Kirby ever left the world of comic books, which is not surprising: after *The Fantastic Four*, that world was no longer too small for them. Between 1962-1966, they created the Hulk, the X-Men, Iron Man, Nick Fury, Daredevil, Black Panther (the first African American superhero), The Silver Surfer, and the comic version of the Norse god Thor (for whom Lee wrote dialogue best described as 'neo-Shakespearean'). During the same period, Lee's collaboration with the gifted artist Steve Ditko produced Spider-Man and Dr. Strange. By the time the comic line was officially named "Marvel" in 1963, the characters were a hit not only with the standard comic audience--seven to twelve year olds--but also with teenagers and even college students. By the end of the decade, there were Marvel clubs on campuses throughout North America. In 1964, Columbia University students launched a campaign that brought the Hulk back from cancellation; when director Federico Fellini visited the United States a year later, one of his first stops was the Marvel office. Marvel's characters were heroes of the counterculture before most of the mainstream recognized that a social revolution was taking place. By the mid-60s, Marvel was presenting allegorized versions of the day's most pressing issues--at a time when the top television shows were *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Gunsmoke*. The early Marvels heavily influenced George Lucas (*Star Wars*), Joss Whedon (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), and Neil Gaiman (*Neverwhere*). Just as important, because of its appeal to an older audience, *The Fantastic Four* made possible a market for comics written exclusively for late-adolescents and adults. In 1978, Lee and Kirby teamed up again to compose the first graphic novel published in North America, *The Silver Surfer: The Ultimate Experience*. The success of that book encouraged publishing houses and bookstores to support graphic novels that had nothing to do with superheroes. And by that point, many young cartoonists excited by the possibilities that Marvel had opened up were ready to explore different genres. But should the early *Fantastic Four* be viewed merely as influential works redolent of a fascinating historical period? In fact, these comics are as good as the very best young adult literature. Above all, Lee and Kirby were master storytellers, and, much to their credit, they did their best work during a time of unprecedented comic book censorship. There has never been a comic illustrator better than Kirby--his technical skill matched his inventiveness and passion. One can only hope that the *Fantastic Four* film will lead to renewed appreciation of Lee and Kirby's achievement.



after his dismissal from National had apparently ended his reign as one of the industry's top artists, he was back at Goodman's company, convinced that he would soon have to start looking for work in advertising. Under these circumstances, Lee and Kirby teamed up for their JLA knock-off. The result was a book of startlingly originality.

What was so different about *The Fantastic Four*? Certainly, the comic has the same basic premise as *Justice League*: a group of super-powered adventurers battle evil. The leader of 'the FF,' Mr. Fantastic, has the powers of the earlier character Plastic Man; the Invisible Girl is a female version of H. G. Wells's hero; the Human Torch is a new take on the 1940s hero (that Torch was an android--this one is teenager Johnny Storm); and the Thing is modeled on the super-strong monsters of horror films. The key to the comic is the characterization: compared to most fantasy characters and to all previous comic book characters, the FF seem like real people. They don't have secret identities; they don't wear masks or capes (until #3, they don't have any uniforms at all); they live in Manhattan, not in a fictional metropolis; they have financial problems (in #9, they go bankrupt and are evicted from their headquarters). More significantly, they are a dysfunctional family. The Torch and the Invisible Girl (Sue Storm) are siblings; in the early issues,

planned to present Ben strictly as a tragic figure but soon decided that he should also be a master of sarcasm and dark humor. Ben became the means through which Lee could mock the conventions of the genre. Every cliché that is uttered in the early issues is quickly deflated by Ben, who is unimpressed by superheroes and by standard comic book scenarios. As engaging as he is, however, Ben is also bad-tempered and given to bouts of self-pity. When he begins a relationship with a blind woman (#8), he finds himself paralyzed by self-doubt. But Ben is no less flawed than his teammates. The scientific genius Richards is far too pedantic and too self-important to be considered a traditional hero. The Torch is the opposite of Robin the Boy Wonder--Johnny is an unapologetic rebel, often insufferably pompous and sometimes even cruel. His sister is an insecure conformist with a dangerous attraction to bad men, specifically the Sub-Mariner, the 1940s character Lee and Kirby revived in #4. Lee and Kirby's answer to JLA was a book about four self-destructive individuals who are in almost constant conflict with one another. Moreover, Lee usually portrayed the FF's villains as victims of their environments (the Mole Man, from #1, is striking out against a society that ostracized him for his ugliness; in the hands of Lee and Kirby, the Sub-Mariner is what we would today call an eco-terrorist). Lee

BACK FROM THE DEADHEAD

■■■ Caution Jam @ The Grad Club
by **Matt Mahoney**, friend of the devil

On the mildly cold night of Friday March the 4th, the Grateful Dead cover band Caution Jam rolled into city of Kingston. After forming in 1992 Caution Jam has become renowned for their extensive exploratory 'jams' that build and blend into a melodious frenzy. As I was told by those in attendance, this was the most highly anticipated concert event of the year. Caution Jam's previous show in Kingston, forever remembered amongst fans as the 'soul shake-down zoom booze' indeed suggested that expectations, as well as the band, were very high.

Performing in the humble Grad Club was significantly different from the band's usual venue, the equally humble Scherzo. The copious amount of fans quickly solaced any anxiety the band may have experienced playing in the alien territory of the Grad Club. The stage was intimately set by their psychedelic tie-dye bed sheet backdrop. The backdrop is celebrated by the band for having 'lots of cool colors' but oddly also celebrated for being reminiscent of the time when the bed sheet was white.

Whatever the case, the band would sort out the dilemma with scathing guitar solos, jettisoning all but the sound of their 'groove cackling' instruments from the unknown recesses of the Grad Club. A musical journey into the unknown their performance indeed turned out to be.

Caution Jam recklessly dug into their first song 'Althea', a show-case Dead tune commonly heard in Kingston from the throbbing speakers of, believe it or not, the Elixir. Like mixing fruit crystals with water, the band smoothly segued into their next song 'West LA Fadeaway', and baby, was it ever Kool-Aid! Like an atomic bomb detonating, the band dropped what can only be termed the 'deepest belly shaking groove funk jam' ever. The vibe of the bar exploded in an enormous mushroom cloud. And on top of that cloud lead guitarist Eric Fefferman ripped a solo more vibrant than a neon beer light. The energy did not waver and was maintained throughout the remainder of the set to the classic Dead tunes of 'Brown-eyed woman', 'Big River' and lastly 'Ramble on Rose'.

During the set break, fans and band members filled up their glasses and conversed about times past and legends of old.

Of particular note during conversation was that the band found the song 'Teddy Bear Picnic' quite amusing. But rather than singing the lyrics "picnic time for teddy bears, the little teddy bears are having a lovely time today" the band sought to create a more vivid picture of a picnic singing "picnic time for teddy bears, I'll smash a bottle over his skull and stab him in his eye and ear."

The second set opener 'Cumberland blues' had the crowd on their toes, a folksy bluegrass tune which morphed into an intimate guitar duel filled with licks that sent shivers down the spine. The entire bar was animated by the magic happening on stage. The experience was enhanced for some by a flashing light that projected all sorts of shapes and images on the backdrop. The harmony between the happenings on stage and the crowd's engagement was spectacular, nobody

knew what was going to happen, least of all the band, yet everything seemed to be entirely necessary, the music could not have happened any other way.

After a monster rendition of 'Samson & Delilah' the band ventured into other rock classics like Steppenwolfe's 'Pusherman' and Tom Petty's 'Last Dance with Mary Jane.' With shrewd adjustments and heavy jams between verses, their renditions created a flavor that was wholly unique, 'Caution'-look out for the heavy jams indeed.

The closer was 'Friend of the Devil', that had everybody in the bar singing in a rather solemn tone, absorbing of the high energy that was so fluent throughout the night. When the bar cleared out there was still a vibe that perpetuated throughout, illuminating everything. The lasting impression the band left to their fans is perhaps best summarized by my friend Colin: "Caution Jam", he said, "is probably better than the Grateful Dead."

Well Colin, you may just be right.

SOME FINE COMPANY

■■■ Keep Yourself Good Company
@ the Elixir, April 5.

New music night on Tuesdays at the Elixir can be a mixed bag sometimes, but anyone who was there this past Tuesday, April 5, and caught Ottawa band Keep Yourself Good Company playing did not go home disappointed.

The band opened up with the title track off their recently release album 'Kingdom Shiny Sparkly', a straightforward guitar romp with melodic, cross-fading vocal jams. Their music is not immediately categorisable- a blend of emo-style moodiness, indie rock chords, and Radiohead-esque vocals.

With five years past since their debut, self-titled album, KYGC is now three albums into their career as a band. Originally named Jupiter, the band formed in Ottawa while the original members were in high school. Since then they've changed their name, won sev-

eral awards, and added guitarist Aaron Libbey, a student at Queen's. Their most recent album has garnered a fair bit of media attention and the band seems on the cusp making something out of themselves. The album itself flows smoothly from the drawn-out, crystal clear, Coldplay reminiscent vocals on the opening song to the almost bluesy guitar twang on the final track.

Onstage the five members of the band seemed well-coordinated and tight together, with point man John Chandler emceeding the proceedings in a confident, humorous manner. He even endured a bit of good-natured heckling over the band's newly-produced video slated to play on MuchMusic. Another audience member pointed out bassist Conor Wild's striking resemblance to comedian Kevin Macdonald, from Kids in the Hall, prompt-

ing a momentary outbreak of hilarity among the band.

In addition to Chandler on lead vocals, Libbey on guitar, Wild on bass, and Chris Wilson on drums, guitarist Steve Bragg hopped back and forth dextrously between his synthesizer and his strings. On some songs Chandler also picked up a guitar- with three guitars going at once the band was able to layer some pretty complex chord patterns, usually dedicating one of the guitars to an over-lain, effects-heavy riffing.

At times their music had a contemplative feel to it. Their style's quite conceptual, even 'artsy', with its complex song structures and moody explorations. Stretches of lyrical strumming and ethereal crooning are juxtaposed with sudden dives into bashing overdriven chords and soulful wailing.

The band has some great vocal talent in the trio of Chandler, Libbey, and Bragg. Each of the three singers is distinct enough to make switches between them meaningful, and each of the

singers has the goods to carry a song by themselves. They demonstrate an inventive style together, incorporating Keith Richards-style 'blurted' background vocals, duelling vocal jams, and cleverly asynchronous harmonies.

Two things stood out as weak in an otherwise solid performance. Firstly, the band's lyrics were unremarkable. Perhaps it was Chandler's singing style, which tended to draw out each syllable, but I didn't find the specific words to be very meaningful to the way the songs felt.

The other thing is that they left me wanting more *rock*. I'm talking bluesy rock, maybe with a little funk on the side but lots of guitar to chew on. If they dished out a little more of the straight-up rock-and-roll that rears its head teasingly in songs like 'Go make your millions' and 'go back to sleep', well, they'd have it all.

More information about the band can be found online at kygc.com.

YOUR GUIDE TO CASUAL SEX

■■■ From organization to orgasm we've got you covered
by **Putnam Pius**

“Over a long enough time horizon, everybody's dead”. So quipped economist John Maynard Keynes. I would like to add: 'And over somewhat shorter time horizon, everybody can have good sex'. Well, I take that back. Not everyone. Good lord not everyone. But anyone who's got a genuine interest in and openness towards sex and who's been with a partner they care about long enough will eventually figure things out- it's not *that* hard. This guide is not for them.

This guide is for the rough-and-dirty, unexpected sex, the random sex, the sex you find yourself having when you least expect it. This guide is for that sex you've planned for all week, you're just not sure who with. This guide is for that horrible but oh so delicious mistake

you make after walking home your best friend from the bar.

1. Bring more than one condom. This is a huge rookie mistake. Why the hell would you only bring one condom? Space issues? If you're having sex, you might as well at least have it two or three times. Trust me, you don't want to be faced with the dilemma of having two willing bodies and no condoms.

2. Lube it good Sure hauling out a half-empty bottle of lube might be a little awkward, but it's still less awkward than 'I can't get it in'. Lube has the power to turn umm okay sex into wild slippery orgasmic thrashing sex. I recommend Astroglide. Nothing like it for getting out of sticky situations.

3. Your place or theirs? There's a lot to be said for your place. You feel a lot more at ease there, you've got access to all your various supplies, and you don't have to undertake the walk of shame afterwards. On the other hand, getting rid of your new friend can be a pain. The best tactic I find is to call them a cab without asking them first.

4. Talk to them Since you may not even know this person's last name, you're not going to have a very clear idea of how their body works and what turns them on. Ask them! More importantly, let them know what you're digging and what you're not. Besides if you can get a stranger to talk dirty it's hot shit.

5. Underwear- a good halfway point. You don't want to be going from pants to naughty bits in 3.6 seconds flat. Wear underwear.

6. Head for head If someone gives you an orgasm you had better give them one back. Guys, I'm mainly pointing the finger at you, but I've had a few instances where I've risen, tongue sore, expectant, only to be told 'bedtime'. That's bogus.

7. Try something new If this is going to be a one-timer encounter then you needn't worry about future embarrassment. This is your chance to try that sexual fantasy- who knows, they just might be like you.

A CUNNING LINGUIST

■■■ Poet Ryan Quinn Flanagan lets us know
by **Sarah Ogden**

Diatribes writer Sarah recently sat down with poet and Queen's student Ryan Quinn Flanagan to discuss Flanagan's newly published book of poetry *Epicurus Cunnilungus*.

Diatribes: What kind of feedback do you get about your writing? Does anyone ever express sentiments of being horribly offended, delighted, etc?

RQF: The feedback I usually get is very positive. Most people seem very refreshed by a fresh outlook and are actively working to escape the stasis of constructed society as well. There are some however who "express sentiments of being horribly offended," not through word, but usually through looks, 'the Mothers Against Everything sneer' is one of my personal favourites to receive.

Strangely enough, most people that are put off by my work, are not put off by the content, but by the medium. There seems to be a great stigma attached to poetry as a viable form of expression (like any form of expression is not a viable one). I do not understand the roots of this notion, but it has been constructed and seems prevalent nonetheless.

Setting personal interpretations aside (such as those of myself) what is your poem "Bonnie and Clyde" about?

"Bonnie and Clyde" is a love story! The work is a glimpse into the secret intimacy of two people before they "prepare their mask for the masks they meet." The work is not only meant to question what people consider to be an intimate relationship, but also why intimacy must be hidden to avoid being institutionalized. "Bonnie and Clyde" is a last stand for Love! Physical destruction is not the only destruction in the work, for more important is the mental and emotional debasement of Love in the bid to conform to societal norms.

The work not only outlines that greater society is not indicative of the people it claims to represent, but also that to survive, those people feel they must conform to societal norms, moonlight as responsible citizens, and by consequence actively participate in the destruction of honest Love. The two protagonists are both culprit and victim. By subscribing to societal masks, they actively participate in the murder of honest Love, but by

participating in their clandestine acts, they also keep the flame alive and continue the fight. The ending not only implies the death of honest Love inherent in "going out in a blaze of citizenry," but also the destruction of the souls of those involved. "Bonnie and Clyde" is the martyrdom of the human soul!

What is your idea of the perfect relationship? I especially wonder after reading "Bonnie and Clyde"!

My idea of the perfect relationship is an imperfect one of understanding. As long as all involved are able to express themselves wholly, honestly, and freely, the rest is gravy! If the aforementioned conditions are present in a relationship, it will be an extremely quirky and unconventional one, not anchored by the societal anchors of conventional morality. My idea of an [im]perfect relationship is exploration through a perpetual ebb and flow of honest experience. This understanding cannot exist among the stifling shadows of self-policing and perfect societal absolutism . . . this is why conventional morality must be assassinated!

One interpretation of your poetry is that it seems to suggest a new type of morality that breaks down the barriers between high

and low-brow. Does this interpretation work? Contesting or agreeing with this interpretation, could you explain further the kind of morality in your work?

This work is meant to suggest that conventional morality, the one of perfect absolutism and ill-fitting labels set in polar opposition, is no longer a viable illusion. But the work also hints at a new way of perception, a way of viewing the world, where subjectivity is not hidden or denied, but rather accepted as a practice. For me, there is no single objective morality which governs us as a people, and the sooner we drop the illusion, the better.

I agree that the work looks to break down barriers through perception, but it does not replace conventional morality with a new mask, it refuses to attend the costume party altogether. If there is a morality to be extricated from my work, it is a very fragile one.

The idea behind the work is the deconstructing of barriers, not the erection of new one. I attempt to break down constructed perceptions, and present new images or ways of thinking to illustrate the fluid perpetual interchangeability of images and experience. The idea is to create an infinitely broad canvas on which to colour your soul.

SEX

SO YOU WANT TO BE A FAG HAG

■■■ by James Boyer

There is no doubt in my mind that HBO's *Sex and the City* has been a trendsetter. Its most obvious impact has been in fashion where the show has made Manolo Blahnik shoes a household name and popularized name necklaces. In the social context, the show has changed the way in which women can talk about their relationships and sex lives. It has also introduced its viewers to the girl with the gay best friend: the 'fag hag'.

It is no secret that gay males and straight females often form strong friendships. I'm not exactly sure why this is. Maybe we can just relate better since we go through the same cycles of joy and suffering at the hands of males. Or maybe girls just take comfort in knowing that they can gain insight into the male mind without worrying about someone trying to get in their pants. Regardless, some girls seem to relish the fag hag status that comes with making gay friends. Like any trend, this one has become firmly entrenched at Queen's. I regularly walk through campus and see gay male-straight female pairings strolling along. I've even seen a few gays with their very own entourages of fag hags. I wonder if these entourages will follow the way of the rap world and if we'll start seeing beefs between rival gay cliques. I doubt it, but it's an amusing thought.

First off I must remind readers that there are many different subcultures within the gay community. Each has their own rules for fag hags, and some don't even have fag hags at all. So this is just a reflection of my own personal experiences.

So for all those ladies looking to achieve fag hag status, here's my 'Guide to Being a Fag Hag', from a fag that's had a few hags in his day.

1 - Don't make an issue out of how our sexuality is a non-issue - This is one of the most confusing things in the world to me. I know a couple of people who are constantly telling me that they 'totally don't care that I'm gay.' This is great to hear once in a while, but it



eventually gets quite repetitive and one has to wonder if whether they are trying to convince me or themselves. A closely related pet peeve is people who say they've always known I was gay and were just waiting for me to come out. This may in fact be true, but please don't remind me of that awkward 'heterosexual' phase I had to go through.

2 - You can't sleep with me - This may seem pretty basic and to an experienced fag hag it is. But you'd be surprised how many girls I get introduced to, find out I'm gay, and then hit on me. I spent 20 years contemplating my sexuality before I finally came to terms with it and started the coming out process. I'd

like to think that constitutes a well-informed decision. And even if you got me drunk enough to do anything, one great fuck with a girl is not going to change my mind.

3 - You can only have one fag - Going back to *Sex and the City*, the ongoing feud between Charlotte's fags Anthony and Stanford shows why you should just stick to one gay best friend. You can have other gay friends, but it's safest to only have one really close one. The gay community at Queen's is incredibly small and interconnected and if your two fags haven't dated they have most certainly been interested in the same person at some point.

4 - I can have many hags - The flipside of guideline 3. This is for your benefit and mine. You probably want to have a boyfriend at some point and therefore we need backup hags to occasionally replace you when you are spending time with him. This rule also comes in handy if I ever take you to a gay nightclub. Girls are great to dance with but as soon as I see the opportunity to pick up another guy, you're on your own. But since I'd feel guilty about leaving you on your own, bringing a fellow hag is a wise decision.

5 - I am not one of the girls - While the idea of several girls and one gay guy dancing at a club (straight or gay) may sound pretty close to a girls' night out, I am not one of the girls. I will go dancing with you. I will eat a tub of ice cream with you and go shopping with you. But I will not be called 'a girl!'. If I wanted to be one of the girls I would have become an entirely different kind of GLBT person.

6 - I don't like romantic comedies - Nothing goes better with a tub of ice cream than a good movie. However my idea of a good movie does not include J.Lo in *Maid in Manhattan*. The only exception to this is if it's a British romantic comedy such as *Love Actually*, because these are generally far superior to their North American counterparts. The female attraction to boring, predictable, superficial, and absurdly idealistic romantic comedies is something I hope to never share.

7 - Always have my back - Chances are I've been your shoulder to cry on whenever your jerk boyfriend mistreated you or one of your girlfriends started a bitch fight. And I was probably there supporting you when you made up with them even though I knew it would only lead to future heartbreak. So it's expected that the same support is returned. Being gay I've always been the odd one out and had to constantly defend myself. Of course it's easier to stand up for myself when I know I've got my entourage at my back so just defend me no matter what I do or say.

So there you have it - my primer on being a fag hag. Hopefully with these few handy reference tips you will find yourself a nice boi to settle down with.

