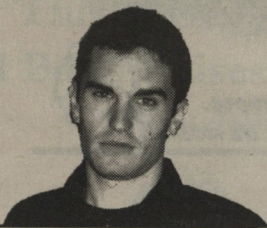


OPINION & COMMENTARY

... And Now For Something Completely

Different: The Rants of a University Student

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If there is one thing in the world that pisses me off (and obviously, there are very few things that piss me off), it's vandalism. This incredible angst just sort of crept up on me last week when I was told that people won't live in downtown Charlottetown because they are scared of the graffiti down there. Now, admittedly, this is kind of stupid, and anyone who is scared of graffiti should be living in Stanley Bridge or something, but the fact remains that there is a disproportionate amount of graffiti downtown. People somehow find it necessary to scrawl stuff on walls to tell the world what is going on in their head. Why? Because nothing says 'I love you' like spray paint on a rock face along the Cobequid Pass? Because you're Straight-Edge? OoOoOo. That's special. Oh, you're anti-establishment? Wonderful. You know what? No one cares. Plus, if you believe in something so strongly, you shouldn't need the attention of the general public to be validated as a person. You should also possess the common sense to discern how truly useless graffiti is. Some random business guy is not going to walk down Queen Street on lunch and see "Down with the system!" or "Screw 'The Man'" written on a wall and think "You know what? They are SO right! What a great idea!" and then quit their job and leave their wife and 2.5 kids in suburbia and go live in the woods and become a vegetarian and eat roots all day. So what's the point? Keep your stupid opinions to yourself and if you want to complain about the world and share your ideas that no one cares about, write an article in a student newspaper or something.

Vandals have been busy all over this city in recent months, ripping cords out of ATM machines here on campus, kicking over gravestones, defacing election posters, trashing statues at churches, etc. etc. Over Christmas people even cut down lights at people's houses and, in Nova Scotia, someone stole a lot-full of trees that a youth groups was selling for charity. What the hell is wrong with people? Like fine, if you want to rob banks, steal cars, jump off buildings, snort crack-cocaine all day, go ahead, whatever. It's still damn stupid, but at least you're getting money or high or adrenaline or some sort of rise out of it. Painting up a wall or kicking over gravestones? Frig right off. I'm generally not a big fan of capital punishment or prison torture, but these

are definitely the types of people that we should bring it back for. And Paul Allen.

Speaking of capital punishment, the California government executed another death-row inmate last week. Now, I am not going to criticize the death penalty in the US, hell I'm not even going to point out that capital punishment is largely counter-productive. They're an independent country, they can make their own laws, and God knows, judging by the number of high-intensity debates we had in Junior High about this issue that it will likely never be resolved anyway. I do, however, sort of balk at the idea of executing a 76-year-old man who is in a wheelchair and legally blind after he waited 23 years on death row. I mean, if the very point of capital punishment is to punish felons and have the families of victims placated, what is the point of having the families of victims wait around for 23 years and meanwhile spending money to keep some guy alive so you can kill him? In September, this old guy, Clarence Ray Allen, nearly died when his heart stopped, but prison officials were like: "Oh no you don't!", revived him, and put him back in his cell. Niieee. That's another four months of room and board to pay for, plus health costs for a 76-year-old blind guy in a wheel chair. This is almost as bad as the system that the Americans have set up in Iraq. Remember Abu Gharib prison? Yeah, the one where American soldiers were torturing Iraqi prisoners? Well it was back in the news last week when the Americans decided to make the prison a, and I quote: "highlight [of] the progress toward democratic governance and the rule of law, demonstrating the involvement of Iraq's government in the effort to provide both security and justice for all Iraqis." Wow. That sounds like a pretty sweet plan. How did they do this? Well by releasing 500 prisoners of course! Were these prisoners found innocent? Nope. Had they served their full-term? Heck no! They just opened the gates and off they went. The prisoners who were released, 500 of a full 1300 releasees in an apparent American 'catch & release' program, were asked to renounce violence and to pledge to be "good citizens" in the new "democratic Iraq".

Guard: "Do you promise not to do anything BAD?"

(Prisoner nods head)

Guard: Now Abdul, are you SURE you won't do anything bad again?"

(Prisoner shrugs)

Guard: (chuckles) "Oh ya little kidder. Get outta here."

I don't know, it just seems a bit contradictory to me. People being imprisoned without charge? Executing seniors? Prisoners who, in any other situation would be referred to as potential terrorists, being spontaneously set free? Riiight.

So some idiot sent me an email the other day telling me that MSN is shutting down for good (they're serious this time!) and that I had better damnwell send it to my entire contact list unless I wanted to be screwed royally. Here, word-for-word, is that email:

Hey it is Andy and john the directors of MSN, sorry for the interruption but msn is closing down. this is because too many inconsiderate people are taking up all the name (eg making up lots of different accounts for just one person), we only have 578 names left. If you would like to close your account, DO NOT SEND THIS MESSAGE ON. If you would like to keep your account, then SEND THIS MESSAGE TO EVERYONE ON YOUR CONTACT LIST. This is no joke, we will be shutting down the servers. Send it on, thanks. WHO EVER DOES NOT SEND THIS MESSAGE, YOUR ACCOUNT WILL BE CLOSED AND YOU WILL COST 10.00 A MONTH TO USE. SEND THIS TO EVERYONE ON YOUR CONTACT LIST. NOW YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. PLEASE DO NOT FORWARD THIS or REPLAY. COPY THE WHOLE EMAIL. GO BACK TO YOUR INBOX AND CLICK ON NEW. AND PASTE THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

I am dead serious. Someone actually sent me this in fear of losing their MSN privileges. Listen there Andy and John, you idiots. Even if you are real people, do you think that people are going to believe that the entire MSN system is left in the hands of two dumbasses who can't even spell words like 'message' and 'reply' and who don't even have a simple grasp of the mechanics of the English language? Who the hell takes the time in their day to write this shit? There is absolutely no gratification to this, unless you're the type of person that gets a rise out of having gullible idiots are sending this message on in perpetuity. Newsflash! You know those emails about some kid in Bolivia who got trampled by a herd of sheep and needs a billion dollars cash by this tomorrow or he's done for? Yeah, didn't happen. I mean I am impressed with the imaginative bullshit these people come up with, but even if there was some truth to any of these stories, sending an email to your contact list isn't going to do a damn thing for

them. It's not going to propagate a miracle, it's not going to force the Bolivian government to invest in Health Care or in better sheep fencing, and Bill Gates sure as hell is not going to give the kid a buck everytime some moron sends the email. Never mind that there is no accurate way of keeping track of how many times the email gets sent, it is just, plain and simple, a stupid idea.

Has anyone watched Family Feud in the past 7 or 8 years? That is the most obnoxious and seizure-inducing half-hour on television. It's even worse than that stupid King Cole Cup of Cash draw. Are these people on crack? No matter what stupid answers these jerks come out with, the whole bunch of them go completely berserk, clapping their hands and shrieking. It's like Tourette's Syndrome on speed. "GOOD ANSWER! GOOD ANSWER!!!" No. No it wasn't. You didn't get shit. Shut the hell up. Where do they get these people? Unit 9? Utah? The Church of Scientology? And who the hell hired Al Borland as host? Yes, the infamous Richard Karn has replaced the massive Louie Anderson, a man whose voice could stun and kill a deaf ox at 50 yards, as host. Of course Karn isn't much of an improvement. I think his only qualification was the fact that he was also a fat aging white guy. If my grandmother didn't enjoy the show so much, I think I'd have to fly down to L.A. and punch Karn in the face. Him and the Golden Girls. And listen Dick; it's SUR-vey, not SHUR-vey. Moron.

And finally, election time has come and gone in Canada once again. Well yippee-ay-oh-kay-eh. I am writing this before most people have cast their ballots, so obviously I can't say for definite sure who our Prime Minister is as you are reading this, but my guess, judging by the "shoot ourselves in the face" campaign strategy of the Liberals, I'm gonna go out on a limb here and guess that good old Stephen Harper is at the helm. And not that this scares me all that much, per se, it's just that his stupidity during the campaign kinda weirded me out a bit. We need to give seniors tons of money because "seniors fought for us in two world wars for us..." Well Stevie, this is partly true, but seeing as there are only four guys alive in Canada that were actually enrolled in the military during World War I, I wouldn't try to go ride that World War I wave too much. Sigh.

Have a good one!

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