

## Proposed bill weds hypocrisy, intolerance

REALIZING THAT THE WILL OF CANADIANS AND MPs are against them, the Tories have unveiled their next move on the same-sex marriage front, after the plan to revisit Bill C-38, the *Civil Marriage Act*, will undoubtedly fall flat on the floor of Parliament.

The Defence of Religions Act is aimed at protecting the rights of religious people in the face of former prime minister Paul Martin's above-mentioned act, which passed in June 2005, and extended the legal definition of marriage to include homosexual unions.

Two of the more salient tidbits of the Conservative's proposed act, according to yesterday's *Globe and Mail*, would allow church groups to decline renting their halls for gay-marriage receptions, and allow a Justice of the Peace to refuse to marry a couple based on his or her religious convictions. It also includes measures that "allow individuals to criticize homosexual activity because it contravenes religious teachings."

In essence, they're asking for an escape clause for intolerance. Public criticism of a person's private life is absolutely unacceptable, unless said private life jeopardizes the public sphere. And being gay affects no one but the gay man or woman and the object of his or her affections. Certainly, Justice Minister Vic Toews' life is not made any worse by my neighbour's homoeroticism. Never mind that a Justice of the Peace is a public position—personal politics or religious convictions have absolutely no place. I may think conservatism is objectionable and immoral for a variety of reasons, but I would never say that Stockwell Day shouldn't be allowed to marry.

If the act allows Christian JPs to refuse to marry homosexuals, a Muslim JP should be able to refuse to marry Hindus, and a secular humanist JP must be allowed to turn away the Bible-thumping fundamentalists he or she finds so objectionable. Surely such refusals would be decried as bigotry—after all, how can a public servant discriminate against people based on their religious convictions? But, apparently, discrimination based on biology is still acceptable.

Putting aside the Defense of Religion Act's dubious morality, it's also poor politics. Over the last couple of years, support for same-sex marriage in Canada has steadily increased. What was an even split ten years ago has become, according to a June 2006 Environics poll, 59 per cent for and 33 per cent against.

The split becomes even more pronounced when Canadians are asked whether the issue should be revisited in Parliament, or whether same-sex marriage should be an election issue: the response is a resounding no. Basically, all trends point to an increasing acceptance of gay people's right to marry, regardless of one's personal religious convictions.

Add that this bill is based on one proposed by Alberta MLA and Tory leadership hopeful Ted Morton—a man so far out in right field that he makes most *Albertan* Tories uncomfortable—and it's clear that the act would be a step backward that Canadians will not accept.

Harper's minority government has been successful because he's stuck to his promises and acted with conviction, while still listening to the will of Canadians. Harper must remember that, for whatever reason, the political climate in Canada is further to the left than it is down south. Much of the public policy that receives resounding support in the States can't hold water in Canada—for the time being, at least. As a man searching for a majority, it would be foolhardy for Harper to let such a regressive policy make it to first reading.

MATT FREHNER  
Editor-in-Chief

## Finances ground AC

THE AIR CANADA PILOTS' UNION IS ATTEMPTING to block a \$2 billion payout to the company's shareholders this week, citing possible bankruptcy as a reason. For a company that just got out of bankruptcy protection and is still getting its ass handed to it by WestJet, it's hard to understand how, with over \$1 billion in outstanding pension obligations to its pilots, it can afford to make this kind of payout to its stockholders. It's even more difficult to understand why anyone would invest in this metaphorical plane crash.

PAUL OWEN  
Sports Editor



MIKE KENDRICK

## LETTERS

### Let's hope that stupidity isn't contagious too

While I support most of the article "Norovirus strikes Lister's residents" printed 3 October, the anonymous tipster's information is a little flawed.

Firstly, I wonder what the chances [are] that she actually, personally knows 150 people in Mackenzie, much less ones with confirmed cases of the virus.

And secondly, seeing as she seems to be unaware that there are about 45 people on each floor. I'd assume her statement that "there are about 50 [cases] on each floor" may be a little off.

I'm pretty sure [that] if numerous floors had every single person living on it suffering from this virus, the health officials might know, what with the vomiting and diarrhea symptoms. Yes, there have been lots of cases of the illness; yes, there was one floor in Mackenzie where nearly everyone was afflicted; and yes, I believe it's a pain having to deal with all the new arrangements around Lister; but seriously, this source needs a reality check.

I would like to think that the author of the article might verify the information given to them by the oh-so-eager-yet-must-remain-nameless girl. Perhaps her words were published out of context, but this poor information might be the very reason residents were asked not to talk to the media.

MELISSA BALL  
Business II

### Anonymous 'expert' clearly unqualified

I'm writing in response to the 3 October article regarding the Norovirus striking Lister Hall

(re: "Norovirus strikes Lister's residents"). It makes me think that maybe there's a reason why residents are being urged to refrain from speaking to the press, the reason of course being that they don't know what the hell they're talking about. The incredibly in-depth interview with one random student, or "expert" if you will, makes me wonder.

I lived in Lister for two years and I'm sure there were never more than 45 residents on one floor, certainly not 50. Although with the 50 cases of Norovirus per floor this would not seem to be the case anymore. Unless of course it has started spreading to the mice it seems unlikely that there are that many cases for each floor.

I'm not a math major but 50 cases per floor, 11 floors in Mac—that makes 550 cases in Mac alone! My god, the cover-up is even larger than our "expert" could comprehend!

With that many cases it makes me think that there is something entirely more sinister than just a cover up going on. Some sort of *V For Vendetta*-style government ploy perhaps. Thankfully our Lister "expert" has opened our eyes to this horror. Before we go boarding everyone inside Lister perhaps you should take ten seconds to think about quotes before presenting them as news.

GREG BLAND  
Petroleum Engineering III

### Oprah doesn't want you for her book club anyway, McMillan

It's sad that Elizabeth MacMillan's editorial about Oprah's book club looked at reading from such an esoteric and limited perspective. Reading isn't only an intellectual activity; it can serve many purposes: For instance, a person can read for pleasure, for escape, and

to give you something to talk about with your friends. Outside of the English major crowd their [sic] are few people who actually get pleasure from reading Derrida or discussing critical theory, so give the poor housewives a break and let them enjoy their dumbed-down Oprah Club Book of the Month in peace.

MICAH BROWN  
Via Internet

### Women's vote wasn't always equal

In his article "Women in parliament a broad issue" (3 October), Patrick Ross states that "by 1940, all of Canada's governments, including the federal government, had passed suffrage bills allowing women full participation in Canadian politics." However, this statement is false. Many Canadian women were not even entitled to vote by 1940. Chinese-Canadian and Japanese-Canadian women were denied the right to vote until 1947 and 1948 respectively, Aboriginal women could not vote until 1960, and franchise was not extended to women with developmental disabilities until 1988.

JACKIE FERNER  
Political Science IV

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, or e-mailed to [letters@gateway.ualberta.ca](mailto:letters@gateway.ualberta.ca).

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Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the author's name, program, year of study and student identification number to be considered for publication.

## LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Black Panthers rally turns violent

We went to the Panther speeches Wednesday night and came home incensed enough with hate to say they should be shot on sight. We went because we knew who would be there: two gentlemen who would speak out against them, as was their right, with honesty and sincerity. The result was as expected and worse.

Those Panthers know what they're doing, all right, and they succeed every time. You thick-skulled artsy idiots don't realize what they're doing to you. They psyche you out, man. It is unbelievable that anyone with a reasonable amount of intelligence could fall for such obvious propaganda.

When two knowledgeable, respectable citizens who realize their gimmick try to expose it, they are hissed and booed down, even bodily attacked. We hope that whoever was punching the pinned-down man got his just desserts from the other's fists. That's a golden gloves prize boxer, if you care to know what hit you. For the information of the broad (she isn't worth more) who asked where he'd been upon his denial of whole-scale discrimination in the States; he's from the US and has at least twice as much education and experience to decide than you have, drippy.

The panthers called these men provocateurs. Any ninny could see that the Panthers were the provocateurs, [and] damned successful too. We are appalled that any intelligent body of students could fall for such filth. What kind of trash is it that pins down someone for others to lash out at him? Perhaps it can be summed up as "scum seeks out scum." If so, we can be consoled in that the majority of the student body was not present.

M & Y KEMP  
21 November, 1969