

Canadian media rights not for sale

WHILE AMERICAN MIDTERM ELECTIONS ARE ALL the rage these days, there's some trouble a'brewing up in Canada's House of Commons. The lobby groups are at it again—this time, on the end of big business media conglomerates. However, they've pushed a little too hard, and Canadian media has taken a hit. On the bright side, politics have taken a step in the right direction, albeit a shaky one.

This Tuesday, federal Heritage Minister Beverly Oda cancelled a fundraiser on her behalf after heavy criticism from her critics. The fundraiser was planned as an event to highlight the upcoming review of issues regarding the Canadian Heritage and Industry positions. On the surface, this may sound like a beneficial event in the regulations of Canadian media, but here's the kicker: the event was largely being pushed by CanWest's head of regulatory affairs, Charlotte Bell. What it boils down to is just another publicity stunt by lobby groups to essentially slither their way into politics through indirect bribery.

It's common to find all sorts of lobby groups trying to garner the favour of political parties, but to witness these kind of backdoor shenanigans is completely unacceptable. Oda, who has held broadcast positions in CanWest and is a former commissioner of the CRTC, needs to be held accountable for her connections and actions. The fact that she not only allowed but supported a media-funded event to support mass media is an irresponsible move on her behalf. As NPD Heritage critic Charlie Angus pointed out, "Everybody knows that the television, broadcast and telecom review is up for grabs. That is the minister charged with the review. We have a lobbyist trying to influence that review and they all come together around a big fancy fundraiser."

Only hours after the criticism, Oda cancelled the event, but maintained that she had "observed every rule existing right now." Granted, she hasn't broken any laws, but the even bigger question of her credibility has been brought to the forefront.

Her cohort, Federal Minister of Industry Maxime Bernier, is currently involved in a whirlwind of media activity in the upcoming review as he will be primarily responsible for decisions regarding Canadian net neutrality, a topic of grave interest amongst media consumers. Conglomerates Bell Globemedia and Rogers are keeping their noses clean in attempt to earn favour with the Canadian government until decisions are made final. These decisions will determine just how much control they receive over the kind of information available to Canadians and what kind of "premiums" can be charged for their own content.

Michael Geist, a University of Ottawa professor specializing in Internet law, illustrates just what kind of situations could arise from legislation to deregulate the web: "Let's say you're Rogers and you're trying to sell Major League Baseball stuff so the Toronto Blue Jays content loads faster than anyone else's, or you're Bell Globemedia, so you ensure that CTV content loads far faster than the CBC's does."

This is completely unheard of. Allowing the big-money corporations to push their own agendas while snuffing out competitors, disguising their antics as "premium services" is a huge step in the wrong direction of consumers' rights in a world that's already severely held back by cloudy copyright laws and ridiculous Digital Rights Management locks.

Coupled with Oda's fraternizing with media outlets, Bernier and company are certain to have their hands full in the next few weeks. The unsettling thing isn't that media companies are trying to control and regulate our freedom—it's that politicians like Oda can be so easily coerced by peers within the industry.

MIKE KENDRICK
Design & Production Editor

Congressional Haiku

Burn on Bush et al:
GOP gets Donkey-punched;
Dems take house, senate.

MATT FREHNER
Poet-in-Chief

23 years later, Hussein and Rumsfeld meet again



ADAM GAUMONT

LETTERS

Abortions not for everyone, Ash

Amanda Ash is a murderer at heart (re: "Modern science only complicates abortion debate," 31 October). It is people like her that will make the lives of the little twin girls hard, not anything else. If Amanda Ash wasn't such a horrid, negative and narrow-minded individual, she might just see that those two little girls are people, not freaks. I'm sorry she was raised in a home that did not teach her about the individual worth of each child that comes to this world; those girls are lucky to have the mother they do and not a wench like Amanda. Too bad Amanda's mom wasn't pro-choice—we would have had less snobs to deal with then.

ANNA DAVIS
Via e-mail

Ashe pans Ash for controversial editorial

How arrogant of Amanda Ash to presume that she knows what is the best course of action for this little family, which has chosen to bear and raise their own children. Shame! Shame for holding such a negative attitude towards a woman's autonomous decision to bear the consequences and do her best to provide for the welfare of her own progeny! This is just the utilitarian, self-serving attitude

one expects from sterile academia.

Perhaps Ms Ash should consider that her own present existence, by her own standards, is expedient to the rest of humanity as well. When her own usefulness is deemed unworthy to society by a possible future disability from accident or genetic defect, will she maintain this same attitude and "just go quietly?"

I am appalled by the utter disregard for basic human rights expressed in this article. Absolutely appalled!

LUANNE M ASHE
Via e-mail

Nikki has an axe 2 grind

I read Maria Kotovych's piece on her name woes with sympathy (re: "Oh, Maria, Maria," 7 November). As someone who grew up sharing a name with a rather crass song by the artist formerly known as the Artist formerly known as Prince (not to mention one with nasty rhyming potential), I have come to the following conclusion: don't ever make what you think is a clever, original joke about someone's name. It is never clever, and most certainly not original.

STICKY NIKKI VAN DUSEN
Alumna

Vandalizing makes a van out of dal and izing

This is a shout out to all the fine folks who think that it's a good idea to vandalize the ads on the stall doors

in the washrooms on campus: what you're doing is wrong. To start off, the giant corporations that you're trying to send a message to don't give a shit that you've scribbled nasty comments on their ads. The only people you're pissing off are the university cleaning staff by creating yet another mess for them—you should feel really good about that.

Vandalizing these ads is not only destructive and immature, it also makes the washrooms you obviously use look totally ghetto. So next time you whip out your sharpie in a vain attempt to get your message across, stop. Put the cap back on and put the marker away. Do something proactive if you feel so strongly that these ads have no place in the washroom; talk to an SU member and see what you can do about it. If you're too lazy to do this then here's another idea for you: ignore them. Relax when you're on the john. You've likely been stressed out all day so make these precious minutes worthwhile and close your eyes, maybe do some long, hard thinking about growing the fuck up. You're a university student, so start acting like one.

KATHRYN ARSENAULT
Arts IV

Smooth can transition stalled by prejudice

It's always been my most frightening moment, from the time I started to transition, and even now that I am fully a man (re: "Third way needed for washrooms," 2 November).

When I first started my hormones, I remember getting remarks from the female inhabitants: "Aren't you in the wrong bathroom?" No, I would reply, not yet. They would panic and get the manager.

It's frustrating and frightening. People need to understand what transsexualism is all about. We are not pervs or an abomination. We are a by-product of nature, and all we want is to align our gender with our physical sex.

Good article and good idea, the bathroom set up.

MARK ANGELO COMMINGS
Via e-mail

Owen crosses the wrong runner in Rally

I am responding to the Cross Country article by Paul Owen (re: "The Pep Rally," 31 October). Owen's article sucks because it does not reflect the Bear's cross-country team. I thought Pep Rally was supposed to support the Bears and not belittle them. This year's Bears cross-country team has work really hard this year and has continued the legacy of running well and representing the U of A.

The cross-country team is going to Québec City this weekend to do battle on the Plaines [of] Abraham. Our team is strong enough to compete for a national medal this year. The Bears have a solid team that is competitive enough to win a national medal this year.

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