

Celebrity nuptials veiled in ignorance

THE HYPE SURROUNDING THE MARRIAGE OF Katie Holmes and Tom Cruise reached its climax last weekend when the couple finally tied the knot in a lavish ceremony set in a 15th-century Italian castle. Now that the fairy tale part is over, there’s nothing left to do but wait for the inevitable divorce. And as traumatizing as it may be for the first-time mother and bride to watch her “happily ever after” crumble away, Katie did one thing right: she married wisely.

It’s easy to point to the couple and dissect their union into one big, bad mistake. The 27-year-old Holmes has reportedly been star-struck by 44-year old Cruise since her youth, and was all too eager to accept his proposal atop the Eiffel Tower after less than three months of dating, diving head first into the cult of Scientology. Instead of exchanging vows right away, the couple chose to become parents first, in an overzealous passion sure to fizzle quickly. But no matter how eccentric TomKat may seem, they still fall in line with the average Hollywood couple, characterized by glitz, glamour and—ultimately—flimsy romance.

The marriage itself is less of a commitment than the child they already share, and is certainly no indication of a lasting union. For Cruise, this was his third time walking down the aisle. It seems that staying together for the kids is a long-forgotten practice—Nicole Kidman and Cruise separated despite their two adopted children. Divorce rates in the United States are at a whopping 49 per cent, and the dissolution of marriages are certainly no stranger to Hollywood.

But even as the odds are against TomKat, at least they have a mutual understanding of the culture of their industry and the responsibility of maintaining a semi-respectable reputation. Not only did TomKat have a happy wedding, but they will also have a happy divorce, unlike the less selective stars who marry outside their realm. Case in point: Britney Spears.

In what her publicist called a joke that went too far, Britney married a childhood friend during a booze-fuelled trip to Las Vegas in 2004, only to annul the union 55 hours later. But the former queen of pop didn’t learn from past mistakes, and only a few months later, made the conscious decision to marry her less-than-classy backup dancer Kevin Federline. Along with the wannabe rapper, Britney planned a wedding that culminated in the couple sharing a meal of chicken fingers and ribs with their family and friends—the couple even wore matching tracksuits. K-Fed’s suit had “The Pimp” emblazoned across his back, a sure indication that any element of class that Britney managed maintain despite her racy outfits and dance moves had gone down the drain as soon as she put on a wedding ring.

Two years and two children later, Britney has seen the errors of her ways, but it seems that it’s too late for her ever to make a respectable comeback. A prenuptial agreement—a sure sign that the marriage was doomed to failure—gives K-Fed (fittingly renamed FedEx) US\$5 million; however, he’s now reported to be blackmailing Britney with a sex tape, allegedly made during the couple’s honeymoon.

Surely the romance of TomKat is quite different than Britney’s relationship with the trashy Federline, who is threatening to ruin her career and squeeze her for all she’s worth. But as K-Fed is trying to tarnish Britney’s reputation, it’s nothing that she didn’t already do herself when she made the decision to marry outside her culture. Tom and Katie, on the other hand, exist in the same circle of stars. Their future may include heart-break, but at least after the divorce papers are signed, there will be pieces left to be picked up, unlike Britney, who is more likely to become a washed-up wanker than reclaim pop princess status.

CHLOÉ FEDIO
Managing Editor

Man, OJ is retarded

IN LIGHT OF THE BAD PUBLICITY IT RECEIVED, OJ Simpson has cancelled his proposed book, which was to be entitled *If I Did It, Here’s How It Happened*. Presumably his next literary endeavour will be something along the lines of *My Last Book: How I Would Have Written It*.

ADAM GAUMONT
Opinion Editor

LETTERS

Molzan’s got it wrong

I almost choked on my lunch when I read Kyle Molzan’s ridiculous letter (re: “Anti-tuition mission won’t come to fruition,” 16 November).

Molzan clearly has no understanding as to what a public education is supposed to be or the challenges that many students face in trying to financially afford to go to the U of A. I am a single mom with a two-year-old son. I work two part-time jobs and have \$23 000 in student debt. I am at the U of A because I chose to be, but in a rich province like Alberta, students shouldn’t be forced to pay ridiculously high tuition rates and take on huge personal debt in order to achieve something that Alberta’s society and economy will benefit from so much and is in desperate need for more of.

Molzan’s right-wing rhetoric mocking those who have to make life-changing personal sacrifices and go into large amounts of debt to afford an education at the U of A is something that he should be ashamed of. He clearly has little understanding of the challenges many students at the U of A are facing on a daily basis.

JENNA CONKLIN
Arts IV

Don’t burden students with the tuition load

Dear Kyle, you must have rich parents. The vast majority of students these days are saddled with some type of debt, whether it is simply from racking up credit cards to pay for groceries or a full-blown \$40 000 student loan.

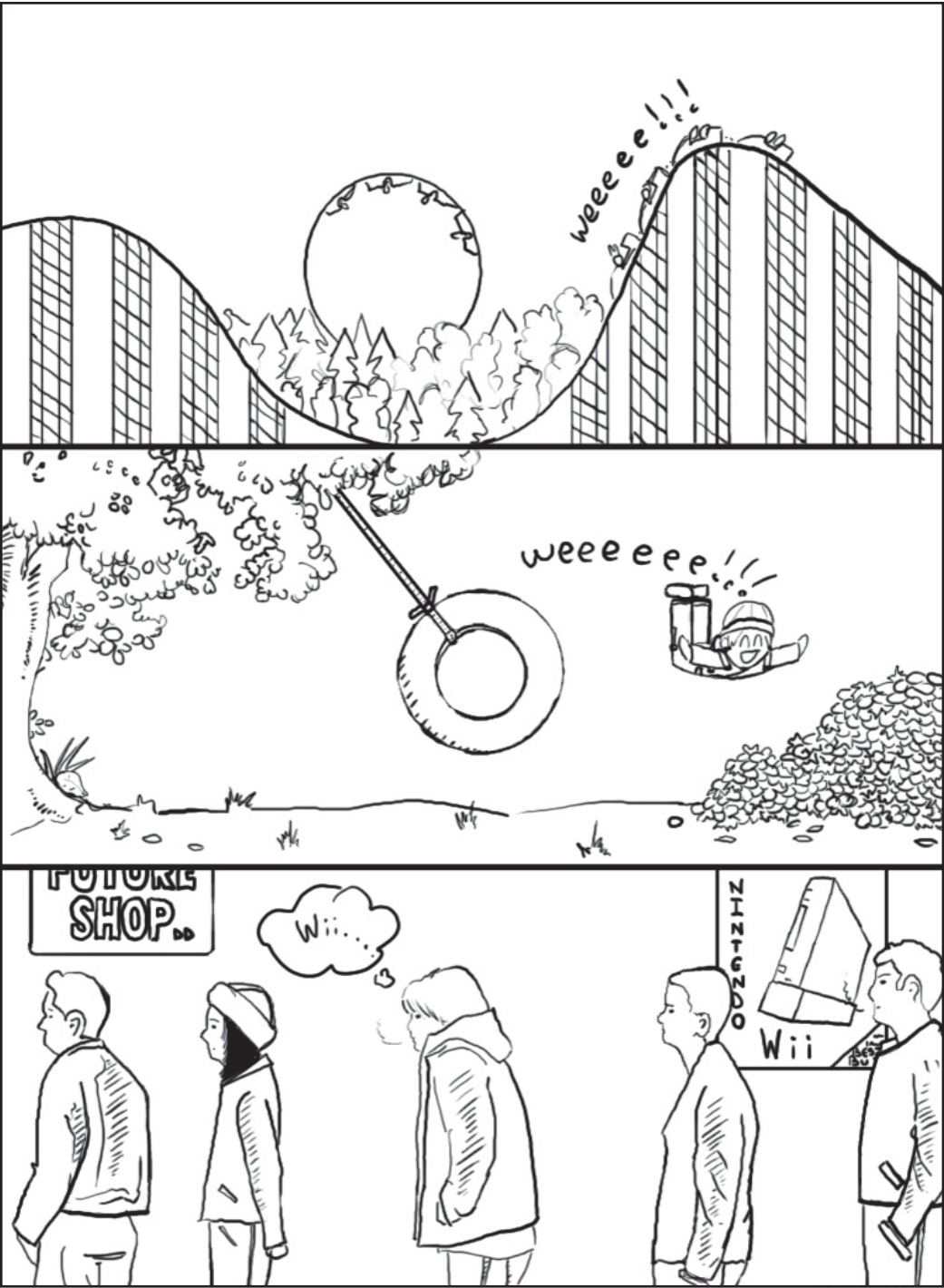
Your views are utterly ridiculous. Take health care for example. If you were in a car accident and the resulting hospital bills were a hundred grand would you shuck them off as simply being a privilege to have the opportunity to have access to the hospital? I would bet good money that you would expect the government to pay your bill because universal health care is a right, not a privilege.

We have just as much of a right to an education as we do to health care. I was under the impression that undergrad degrees were granted based on academic achievement, not on whether you can pay more for it than the average person. Sure there is a cost involved in getting this education, but I am opposed to tuition increases because school would have cost me half as much 15 or 20 years ago. The government has a great benefit in the long run by supporting a large portion of our education. High school graduates on average make far, far less than those with degrees; presumably that is why we are in university in the first place. These higher wages result in much more tax being returned to the government in the long run than the initial cost to get a degree. So it is not just an expense that the taxpayers are incurring, but an investment into the future of the country.

As “Joe Blow” I do not expect to receive an education for free. I just resent the thought of paying two or three times what my parents did to get the same degree.

NOEL PALMER
Business II

JASON LUK
Engineering IV



MATTHEW BARRETT

Province should pony up for the cost of education

Holy crap, what was with Kyle Molzan’s letter? First, if cost is the only thing keeping the U of A’s reputation above “toilet paper,” we have a severely larger issue than bitching about tuition. Imagine his logic taken to health care. “Oh my God you’re in the hospital! Oh just the free U of A hospital. If you were really sick you would be at an expensive American hospital. Anyone can get into the U of A.” The reputation is earned from the high quality of education. A degree is earned with hard work and intelligence and should never have anything to do with Mommy and Daddy’s bank account.

Second, it’s important to note that Molzan’s an engineer. Not everyone on campus has ridiculously high paying summer jobs thrown at them, piles of corporate-sponsored scholarships available, and a truck-load of oil money awaiting them upon graduation. Unless anyone thinks all those involved with social work or educating our children should change faculties, don’t knock people struggling to get into a less lucrative, yet equally important career. At most he can only argue that engineers shouldn’t be tuition bitching in this province.

Lastly, the whole province greatly benefits from a more educated work force. That is why the whole province should have a great share in its cost.

Gaumont is Gaudumb

While the article “Citizendum is citizendumb” (16 November) is interesting, it gets off on a bad footing with the first sentence: “In response to admittedly deserved criticism regarding its quality and reliability, the Wikimedia Foundation has announced that it will be launching Citizendum, a new branch of Wikipedia that will be expert-written as opposed to the current free-for-all format.”

As an administrator on the English-language Wikipedia, I very strongly doubt that the Foundation did any such thing—Citizendum has no connection with Wikipedia whatsoever. Citizendum is a project founded by Larry Sanger, who was one of the two co-founders of Wikipedia back in 2001 but left the project in 2002. Sanger has issues with Wikipedia’s “anyone can edit” ethos, and wants to try creating an online encyclopedia based on expert input—and good luck to him, it will certainly be a different product to Wikipedia, if it works.

ARWEL PARRY
Administrator
en.wikipedia.org

Do your research on encyclopedia story

I’d like to thank Adam Gaumont for his support of Wikipedia. However, there’s a few points to clarify.

Most important of clarifications is Citizendum’s ownership. While Larry

Sanger was involved with Wikipedia from the start, he has not been associated with the Wikimedia Foundation for years. Sanger recently participated in the Digital Universe project, which plans to include an encyclopedia, but jumped ship to found Citizendum, more to his vision.

As Citizendum and Wikipedia are both freely licenced through the GNU Free Documentation License, they will freely be able to borrow and improve our best content, just as we can borrow and improve theirs. Depending on the perspective one takes, this is a win-win situation.

We do already have some of the security suggestions you’ve made. In limited (self-imposed, for sake of ensuring privacy) circumstances, we can request the IP address of any user, essentially detecting their identity.

NICK MOREAU
Communications Committee
Wikimedia Foundation

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