

There's *salat* to like about new sitcom

MANY OF US HAVE TO ADMIT THAT, AFTER 9/11, we looked over our shoulders. Many of us suspected Muslim-Canadians of dabbling in terrorist activities. Many of us suspected brown-skinned individuals of harbouring ill feelings towards Westerners. Many of us questioned Islam altogether.

American media stations like CNN and FOX made stretched conjectures after 9/11, flooding television screens with inferences and unnecessary racial profiling. Canadians were a bit better about things. If we had our reservations about the whole situation—a natural enough reaction—between the Middle East and the US, we didn't blow them out of proportion. We're a country that welcomes individuality and ethnicity with open arms, and from my perspective, we handled the situation quite nicely.

Enter the CBC comedy airing today, entitled *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. The show is the work of Zaqqa Nawaz, a 39-year-old Regina-based filmmaker who also happens to be a Muslim-Canadian. According to the *Globe and Mail*, international media has been all over the new series, including CNN, BBC, *The New York Times*, the *Houston Chronicle* and countless American blogs.

Nawaz was understandably a bit puzzled by the attention *Little Mosque* is receiving, mainly because she believes people are assuming that the show is going to be highly controversial by nature. To her, the show is just a comedy about Muslims living in a small prairie town, poking fun at rural Canadian life. A show like this is needed to destroy the preconceived notions many—including Canadians—have of Muslims. If we knew how to handle the 9/11 crisis in a respectable manner, then we should know how to handle the misconceptions the media will transpose onto the program. What we have to avoid doing is turning the show into some sort of spectacle, like the international media is currently doing. On the other hand, we just can't take the show for granted; we don't know *everything* about the Muslims that live in our country.

For the most part, Canadians are aware of their country's inherent multiculturalisms, but *Little Mosque* can also be used to further our understanding about Muslims. If we refuse to recognize the show as just another Canadian television program, we're blinding ourselves to how much more we have to learn. If Canadians can laugh at themselves for being hicks who hang out at gas stations, then why can't Muslims laugh at themselves for not being allowed to drink alcohol?

Hopefully *Little Mosque on the Prairie* will present itself as a mirror to the world and show everyone just how ridiculous and naïve they can be about other cultures. Hopefully it turns the tables on Canadians, showing us just how little we know about our ethnically diverse country, all the while poking fun at us via our own wheat-and-grain language.

AMANDA ASH
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Strange fruit indeed

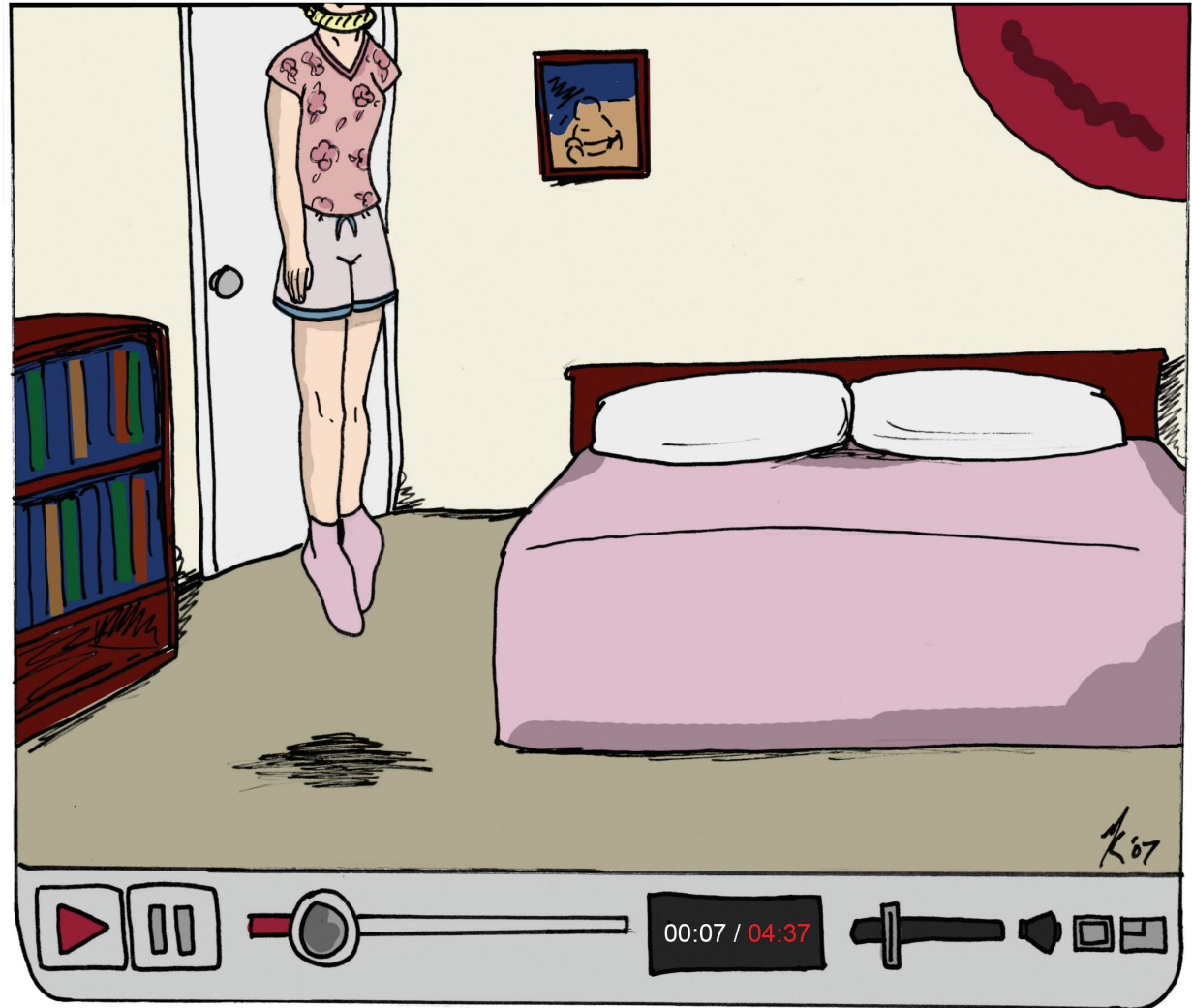
IN ITS RELATIVELY SHORT LIFESPAN, YOUTUBE has already become quite famous for the prevalence of copy-cat videos that spring up almost immediately after the originals. For every famous clip that spreads like wildfire across the Internet, some low-budget lampoon can be found on the site within days.

Normally, such homages are a testament to the currency and impact that YouTube has in today's fast-paced media world of cellphone cameras and citizen journalists. Also testament to this fact is the recent (cellphone) video of Saddam Hussein's hanging—a sight no one could have dreamed of witnessing even five years ago. Mix those two together, however, and you have a disastrous effect. As of press time, no less than three children have hanged themselves after viewing the video. And yes, they died.

Say what you will about natural selection, this clearly all YouTube's fault for corrupting today's youth. And what's wrong with parents these days, when they can't even teach their children not to hang themselves? Back in my day, we would have got beaten the minute we started tying that noose.

ADAM GAUMONT
Opinion Editor

lonelygirl15 - im soo sorry<3



MIKE KENDRICK

LETTERS

A New Year's resolution for Canadian students

One of the dominant narratives of the 20th century was that of humanity's collective failure to stand up to evil. In the face of global indifference, however, one group of people consistently raised its voice to demand justice: students.

October 1956: Hungarian students march down the streets of Budapest triggering that country's revolt against Soviet rule. 1960s, the American South: white students from the North partake in "Freedom Rides" in an attempt to de-segregate busses in the racist South. Late 1980s, around the world: students help lead an international boycott against apartheid South Africa, crippling its economy and helping bring down the regime.

Fast forward to 2007, Darfur. Its endless graveyards are evidence of crimes against humanity. Burned-out villages are becoming permanent reminders of what has thus far transpired under our watch. The faces of refugees tell stories of unspeakable horror.

But for Darfur, the tides have been turning. World leaders and celebrities alike are speaking out. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has called the situation "unacceptable." The UN Human Rights Council held a special session on Darfur. Sudan is starting to feel the pressure. In short, we are moving closer to putting UN peacekeepers on the ground to strengthen civilian protection.

We are at a critical moment. It is time that Canadian students en masse join together to pressure our government to take concrete steps to bring about an end to the killing in Darfur. After four years of inaction, over 200 000 dead and millions displaced, we need to take a stand. Never Again means never again.

Canada can and must take on a leadership role in ending this crisis. On the diplomatic front we can help jump-start a multilateral mission to protect civilians. Our CF-18 aircraft could help enforce a no-fly zone to prevent Sudanese aircraft from bombing villages as they aid the *Janjaweed* militias. Financially, our aid dollars can provide critical support. It's time we come out and commit; we have the capacity to lead.

Acting on that capacity is simple. The prime minister needs to pick up the phone, rally his government and world leaders to join in implementing a strong multinational force on the ground to protect civilians.

To this point he has not been nearly vocal enough—and we are seeing the results of inaction. But politicians do not act without a reason. If the prime minister is going to pick up the phone he needs to see that his constituents demand more—that Canadians demand leadership.

This is where we come in. Our government answers to us. We just need to be heard. Students know how to organize and mobilize; we do it on our campuses every day. We're experts at writing letters, signing petitions and getting our message out there. This instance should be no different. From Victoria to St John's, it's time Canadian students speak as one national voice demanding a real response to the Darfur crisis.

"A New Year's Resolution for Canadian Students" is being published in over two dozen student newspapers in all provinces and both official languages this week.

BEN FINE
JOSH SCHEINERT
STAND Canada

Show us the money, SU

(Re: "Whole tuition story needs to be heard," 30 November). Ms Power, I welcome your opinion into

this debate, however spewing statistics left and right can skew arguments in anyone's favour. I too am able to toss numbers onto the table. As you stated there are fewer professors at the U of A than there were 15 years ago, this is true. However, professors shouldn't be your first and last resource for guidance. TAs, grad teachers, and assistant professors exist, and it should be the students' responsibility to seek out these resources. Since 1990, the University has seen an increase of 5000 academic staff. However, quality of education shouldn't be determined by the number of professors but rather by the caliber of their teaching. Personally, I have never seen a prof turn me away in the name of research.

Although, I have not come here to reiterate points that have been mentioned numerous times in passing, but rather to immerse myself into the shoes of those who lobby for the reduction of tuition. Of course, my stance also comes with a certain sense of criticism and skepticism.

In an article by Chloé Fedio ("SU Who's Who," 7 September), you were quoted [as saying], "The five of us are students' advocates to the University and to the provincial and municipal governments: we're talking to those people on a daily basis and trying to change their decisions to be more student-friendly, and that has an impact on the quality of teaching that you're getting."

As the halfway milestone of your reign draws near, I submit to you the following question as a paying student into the SU membership fee: How has the SU bettered its position on tuition today then four months ago from the "daily" interactions you speak of? It's one thing to solicit and advocate for lower tuition, but it's also another to come to the table with solutions. Similarly to your mandate, I too wish to take the high road by campaigning for lower tuition and more study space. However, if I may be so bold [as] to speak candidly,

where the fuck is this money going to come from?

As the provincial elections draws to an end, political leaders have been forced to keep their ears low to ground and actually listen to what people have to say. As [the] leaders and cunning minds of tomorrow, if all we have to offer is a wall of red paper bricks and a cardboard coffin, then I seriously question the direction of the SU in fulfilling its ambition for the lowest tuition in Canada.

CHRIS TSANG
Chemical Engineering III

Tuition debate can do without the gimmicks

In response to the tremendous amount of anti-affordable-tuition letters, let me pose a question. Would lowering the tuition really put the general student body at a disadvantage? It is clear to me that those opposing affordable post-secondary education are oblivious to the larger perspective. While I am a student who chose to attend university and fully expected to pay a large sum to do so, I believe that affordable education not only benefits current students, but prospective students and society as a whole as well.

In case us university intellectuals didn't realize, there are people in our own city who simply cannot afford to obtain a postsecondary education. This, in itself, is a tragedy. Yes, postsecondary education is a privilege, but a privilege that should not be restricted only to the wealthy. It is a privilege that should be restricted to those dedicated to learning, motivated to work hard, and those that truly desire to be there.

Lowering tuition doesn't have to be about ridiculous mock funerals or walls of debt, it can be about helping people realize dreams or gaining opportunities.

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