

Harper's actions just veiled racism

ONE OF THE LAST PLACES I WANT TO BE SEEN is at a polling station. I mean, how can I justify acting like an apathetic fuckwit if I've got the motivation to draw a checkmark for the man? That's like carpet-bombing a city with flowers—it just doesn't show that you're serious about your choices.

And now, with the introduction of Bill C-31 this past June that requires the presentation of photo-identification before you're allowed to vote, I no longer have the option of throwing on dark sunglasses and a hat and slinking into the voting booth like I'm entering a porn shop.

Recently, however, Canada's chief electoral officer, Marc Mayrand, introduced a new policy that would allow veiled women to vote without having to show their faces. A decision worthy of praise for its cultural sensitivity, and one that has Stephen Harper mad enough to uppercute a child.

Harper has said that he "profoundly disagree[s] with the decision," stating that it contravened the currently established legislature. He even went so far as to threaten to get parliament to reverse Election Canada's ruling if they refused to do so themselves—much like the way your mother used to threaten to "go get dad" when you refused to clean up your room.

Thus far, Maynard has had the balls to call Harper's bluff, and suggested that maybe instead, parliament should try to revise the current confusing legislature on the subject. However, this would mean that the Conservative government would be required to do actual work, something they've avoided since being elected in 2006.

I'm sure that this has prompted Stephen to pick up the phone several times, only to scream at it in fury before hanging up—but really, why the fuck does he care? It's not like an army of veiled voters are going to start popping up everywhere like ninjas. And even if this were the case, Elections Canada has established protocols to ensure that voters are who they claim to be.

If someone chooses not to raise their veil, then they are required to present a second piece of identification from an approved list—or, alternatively, they can have another elector from the same polling division vouch for their identity under oath. If this proves unsatisfactory, there's also the additional step of having both individuals cross their hearts and hope to die with the possibility of having to stick a needle into their eye.

Sure, they could always steal somebody else's wallet and use their ID, and it's not like lying under oath is uncommon, but how many people are actually going to be willing to go to that much trouble? The most recent voter turnout for the Federal election was pegged at 64.7 per cent, and with a simple two-minute car ride being enough to deter many people from voting, the chances of mass fraud occurring are slim to none.

To put it bluntly, this decision will have about the same amount of impact on elections as allowing grizzly bears to vote. And yes, I've considered the effects of setting a bear loose in a polling station—it would only reduce the number of votes the Green Party receives. It's kind of hard to want to protect the environment after you've been brutally mauled.

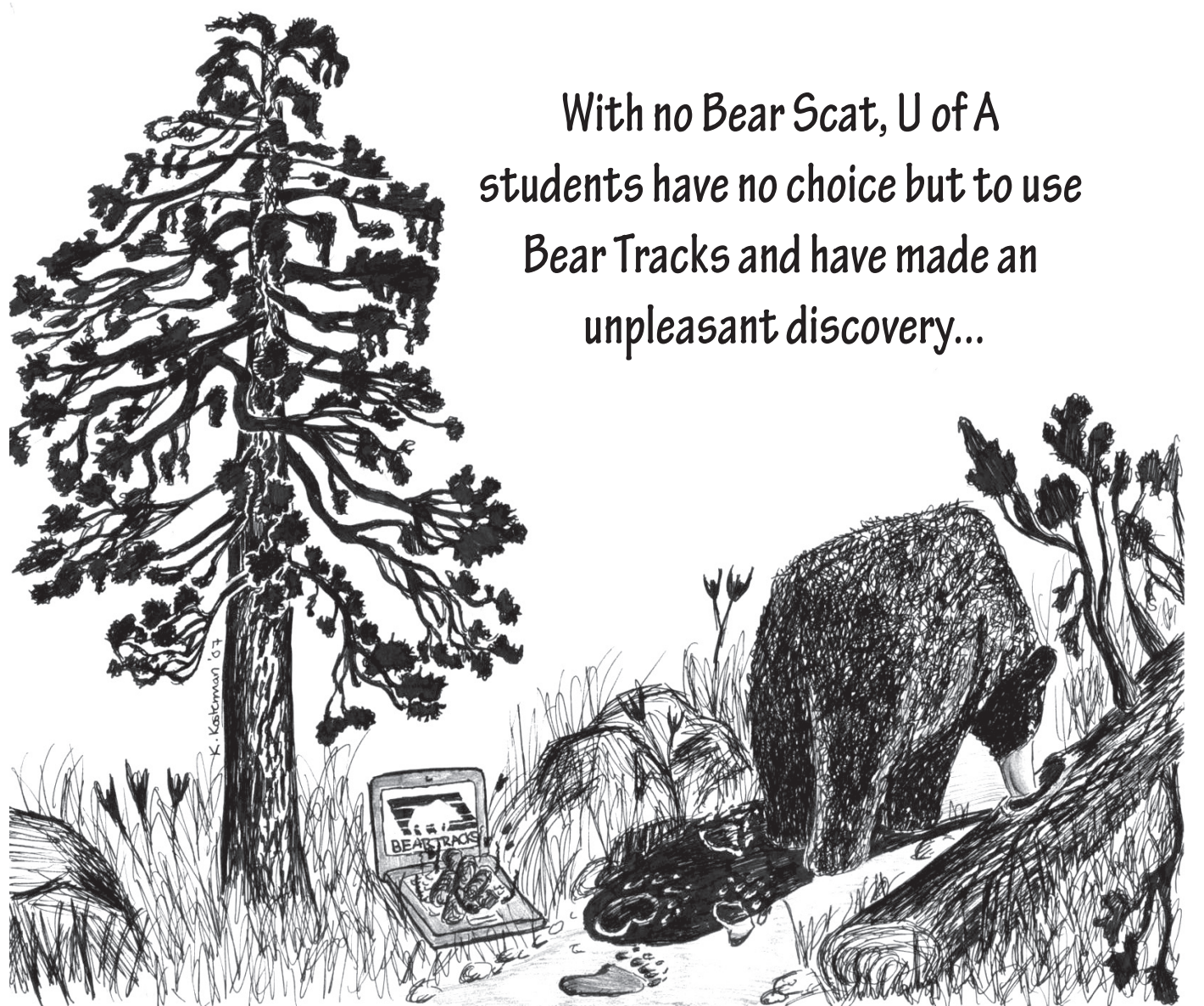
CONAL PIERSE
Opinion Editor

Single ain't so lonely

ACCORDING TO STATS CANADA, THE LATEST census shows that bachelors and bachelorettes now comprise 51.5 per cent of the population over the age of 15. This means that for the first time in this country, married folk are the minority.

While the cause of this could be the increase in common law relationships or single-parent families being more socially acceptable, I think there's a more basic logic behind this trend. It appears that society is finally heeding the wisdom of the great Internet philosopher Anonymous, who posed the question: "Why bother buying the cow, if you can get the sex for free?"

PAUL OWEN
Managing Editor



KATE KOSTERMAN

With no Bear Scat, U of A students have no choice but to use Bear Tracks and have made an unpleasant discovery...

LETTERS

University has done little emergency preparation

It's to my dismay that I believe both the President of the University and the security department haven't been vocal enough about what they're doing to ensure the safety of the students.

In light of what happened last spring at Virginia Tech, along with several more violent incidents at schools both in the United States and in Canada, I don't believe that the University is doing enough to prepare students in the event that something violent happens here.

Other than placing a direct link to the institution's ill-designed, confusing, and time-consuming "Emergency Management" website—where, let's face it, the only one's who'll visit and sift through it are those who have remarkable attention spans or those who have too much time—and a cute little five-paragraph note on President Samarasekera's office's website entitled "A great university; readiness, resiliency, and robustness when a disaster strikes," the administration has done very little to prepare students to respond in the unlikely even that something violent occurs. Nor has it reinforced or fostered within students a feeling of protection and safety.

I recommend that both President Samarasekera and the security department write an email to the students regarding what is to be done in the event that something violent does happen, and what is already being done to minimize the chances of something happening.

MARK HOGE
Sociology/Chinese III

To my very own heroes

I wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you to the people that helped me out in the Dentistry and Pharmacy building Monday morning around 9am.

Thank you for taking the time to make sure I was alright, and for getting me the help I need. Especially thank-you to Catherine, the only person I know by name, for being at my side and holding my hand to comfort me.

As well, thank you to the gentleman that was already calling for help before I came to. Also, thank you to the other gentleman that watched over me. It's a comfort to know that there are still people who can stop and care for one another.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

ALISSA KOWALCHUK
Education IV

Nobody laughing on 9/11

I'm very disappointed with the quality of Jonn Kmech's article (Re: "Osama tape should've stayed in cave," 11 September). Even though it's meant to be a humorous article, it's not what I would expect from a University publication.

He says, "God help us if the Iraq war reaches syndication and is on every channel, all day." I interpret that loaded statement to mean that war is depressing and that it's better to be swept away into a blissful delirium of sitcoms and reality show pap.

The article could've investigated the controversy of the tapes legitimacy. It could've expounded on the fact that Bin Laden is still out there making tapes after six years of having a \$50-million bounty on his head. What happened to capturing him dead or alive and smoking him out of his cave?

You could've mentioned that in the six years since 9/11, the US has invaded Iraq, captured Saddam, deloused him, and executed him, but Osama has somehow evaded them.

Fahrenheit 9/11 showed that Bin Laden is being protected by his connections to the Bush family. Jonn wasted an opportunity to shed some light on this hot topic, and instead gave us drivel about how the rapidly changing post-9/11 world is just like a sitcom. I would encourage everyone to spend time thinking about the important issue of the war on terror instead of being willfully ignorant.

THEO COLE
Electrical Engineering V

The lunchtime thoughts

During my brief study break in SUB to eat some leftover chili and stare at my comrades, I thought I might collect all of my random thoughts into a pointless, meandering letter to the editor. Not that I'm not working hard, but I'm just not working hard enough.

Random thought number one: yeah, I'm pissed about Bear Scat, so let's just get that out of the way.

Two: I love being back on campus. Nothing makes me happier than seeing garbage everywhere, a bunch of super-psyched people on a mission to save whomever, tents and booths, forced conversation, paper in urinals, free food—the list goes on.

Three: the coin-toss in SUB to see whether or not the wireless Internet is going to work. That wasn't so much a random thought—more of a random event actually—but I'm sure you're smart enough to infer my thoughts about this.

Four: the U-Pass is the best thing the SU has done in my time here.

Five: basically, I just want to rant about one particular group, whom

I'm going to stereotype together for sake of simplicity: the freshmen. Yes, I know you're not all the same, but most of you are. I lucked out this year to be registered in some first-year classes again to fill in some random science credit.

I miss how the profs speak to you like you're retarded, and in retaliation you then assume that you're the smartest person in the room. Awesome! I also love the way that many of you haven't yet tasted a drink called serious debt (like a prairie fire, only sharper), and therefore don't really appreciate the value of a dollar; my evidence for this is that there are coupons all over the ground which collectively say "Free Shit" on them.

But don't worry; they're mine now. And please, fear not; you actually are the coolest person in the world. In case you weren't sure, you are awesome. Party on, and don't worry about me—although I did compromise my image for a few seconds to pick up your garbage. Everything will balance out as I cash in my hundreds of dollars of Hudson's Gift certificates—one jug at a time.

ERIC KONSCHUH
Science III

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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.