

## Gay Dumbledore teaches tolerance

IN A RECENT APPEARANCE AT CARNEGIE HALL, when asked whether or not Albus Dumbledore ever fell in love, Harry Potter creator JK Rowling shocked fans by revealing that the beloved wizard was, in fact, intended to be gay. Not to have this misconstrued as her saying that gay men are incapable of love, she followed up by explaining that, as a young man, he fell in love with the dark wizard Grindlewald—statements that were met with thunderous, well-deserved applause from the audience.

This is the kind of thing that slash-fiction writers worldwide have been dreaming of, and the religious right are also breathing a sigh of relief knowing that they dodged a bullet in banning this work of dark man-on-man magic, but I see this as a real triumph. After all, it isn't every day that you see a positive, non-stereotypical gay role model in literature—especially not in a best-selling children's book.

This is especially significant considering it was another children's book, *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin*, that sparked the controversy that led to the introduction of Section 28—a constitutional amendment prohibiting “local authorities” from promoting homosexuality, or teaching “the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship”—into British Law in 1988. And should you think that this occurred a long time ago in a completely different political climate, this amendment wasn't successfully repealed until 2003, after several failed attempts.

You needn't look further than the debate surrounding gay marriage to see that people are still afraid of the imagined negative effects of gay authority figures on children. There's a belief that by condoning the gay lifestyle, it will result in homosexual hypnosis, with children busting out the assless leather chaps with the snap of a pair of well-manicured fingers. This is, and always has been, blatantly ridiculous. Rowling has done us all a favour by promoting tolerance and diversity in her cast of characters.

Of course, now that Dumbledore's stopped hiding with Aslan and come out of the wardrobe, people are going to start rereading the books in search of clues that hinted at his hidden sexuality. But aside from some convoluted Freudian interpretations of his skill with a “wand”—or, to go more low-brow, his love for chocolate frogs—they're going to find that there weren't any.

To read Dumbledore as anything other than a caring mentor who just so happens to be gay is clutching at straws. It's assuming that, in essence, there must be something fundamentally different between the behaviour of a gay and straight man that goes beyond mere sexuality, which is, unfortunately, how many gay characters tend to be portrayed.

This revelation doesn't alter the character one bit, as throughout the series, Dumbledore can be seen as a largely asexual surrogate parent. Therefore, any kind of potential backlash stirred up by this non-issue is not only unwarranted but completely unjustified—even if it were revealed that Dumbledore had relations with a centaur in his wilder days, it shouldn't affect our view of his relationship with the students at Hogwarts, and Harry in particular.

The most important thing about Rowling's revelation is that it demonstrates to children that an individual's sexuality has no bearing, nor should it have any, on an individual's ability to be kind, honest, or caring. It's a positive message that shows that homosexual men don't have to fit in to a pre-conceived archetype and don't always have to be the self-loathing Voldemort, or an effeminate Neville Longbottom.

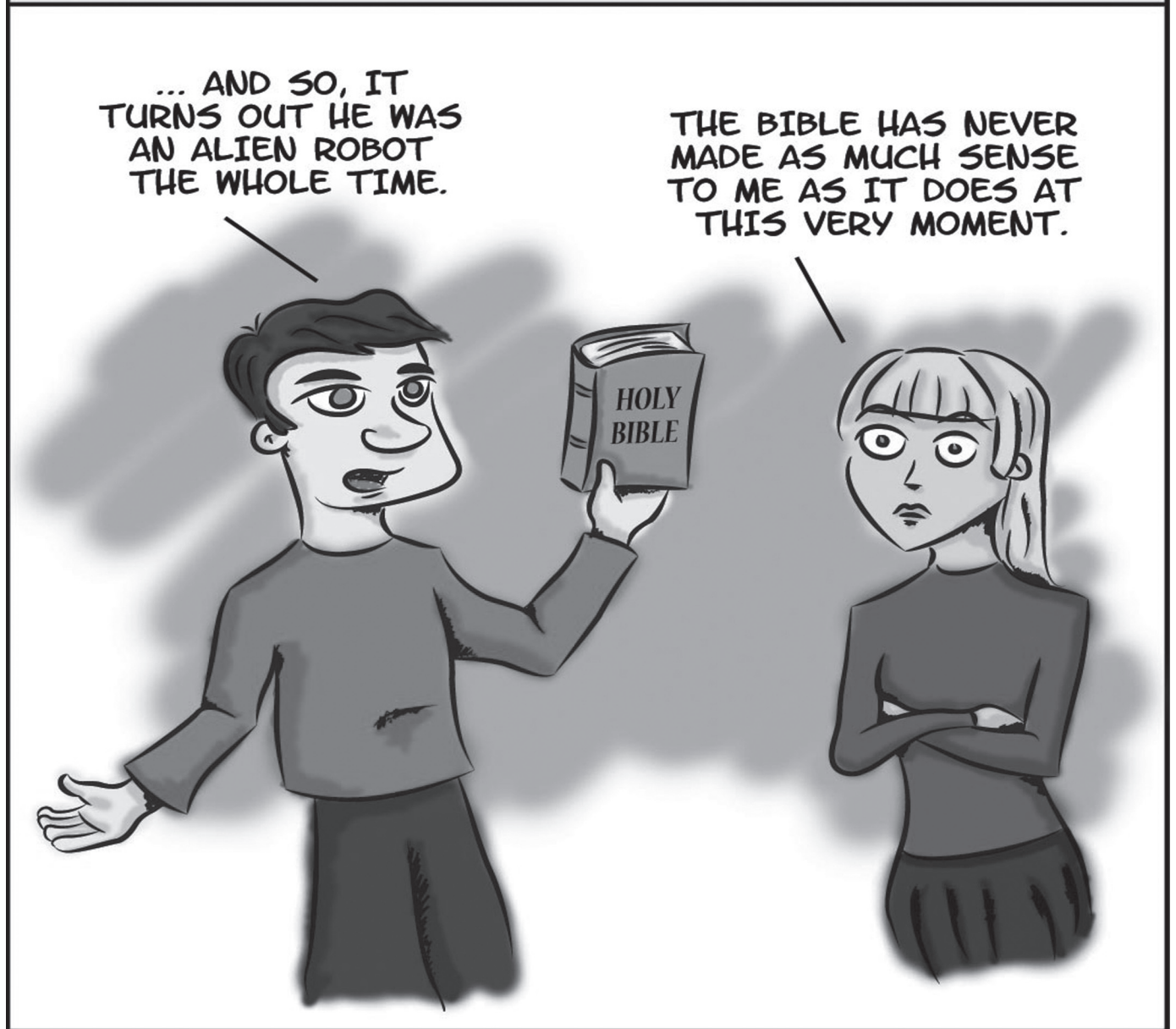
CONAL PIERSE  
Opinion Editor

## Get this man a tissue

Homecoming sob-fest  
Keeps Smytty off the scoresheet  
Likewise for the Oil

RYAN HEISE  
Deputy News Editor

FOLLOWING J.K. ROWLING'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF DUMBLEDORE'S HOMOSEXUALITY, OTHER BOOKS SOON FOLLOW SUIT WITH THEIR OWN RETROACTIVE REVISIONS.



NORMAN LAU

## LETTERS

### Pumpkin smashed; poverty remains

It seems to me that a true desire to eradicate poverty requires critical self-evaluation to determine whether we, with our actions, are actually easing or exacerbating the problem. Last week's Make Poverty History spectacle appeared to be doing the latter.

As people stood around in their designer clothing (most likely made in some Third World sweatshop), watching a crane (hired at anywhere from \$150-300 an hour for at least three hours) hoist a [500]lb pumpkin (which would have made a lot of soup at the soup kitchen for many local citizens who don't have enough to eat), into the air and drop it on a van (of unknown value but certainly requiring some cost to get it to and from the site), I couldn't help but wonder how such a wanton display of wasteful activity helped ease the concerns of those people actually affected by poverty.

Easing poverty is a difficult, never-ending process requiring sacrifice and responsible, self-critical lifestyles—particularly for those of us living in the affluent materialistic Western societies. There may have been symbolism in the “smashing” of the pumpkin, but in the eyes of the less fortunate, I doubt it was the symbolism that the organizers of this event wished to portray.

MARVIN DUECK  
Music II

### Ribbons battle apathy

Your certainty is mistaken, Douglas (re: “People can't live off of eating fancy ribbons,” 18 October). The plastic streamers didn't end up strewn across Quad, and the money and time spent on them were insignificant compared to the impact they made. Putting up a few fancy ribbons to fight the unbelievable scale of apathy in our university is a small price to pay.

If you would like to suggest more effective ways to engage the student body on the issue of poverty, you are invited to share them on the Make Poverty History Edmonton Facebook group or at our next General Members Meeting this Thursday at 5pm in the Earth Sciences Building room 2-36.

MARK MCCORMACK  
President  
Make Poverty History campaign

### Have sex with her? But I don't know the girl, sir

I hate to do this (that's what she said), but I'm afraid I must point out several errors in the 18 October letter from my esteemed roommate, Catrin Berghoff (re: “Pickle Frenzy, we hardly knew ye”).

First, as kind as it was of the Gateway to edit in the full name the board game club commonly known as POGOB, the P in fact stands not for “Playing,” but for “Players.”

Second, the adjective Ms Berghoff chose to describe said club is in fact spelled “illustrious.” This error is massive, and sullies the Gateway letter section's good name. I can't believe you let something that massive in

there. Which is what she said.

Third, Ms Berghoff's implication that she is in any way superior to me in the art of juvenile sexual innuendo is plainly ridiculous, as evidenced by her need to essentially flat out lie simply to have an excuse to make a strained play on the word “verbatim.” I don't have to lie to get what I need, and that's what she said.

You might have to think about that one, but it'll come. (That's what she said.)

Finally, as to Ms Berghoff's original complaint that Mike Kendrick stole the idea for the 16 October *Pickle Frenzy* comic from me, I must admit that I'm not convinced—though in truth it wouldn't be the first time Mr Kendrick had taken inspiration for one of his comics from me. At any rate, even if Ms Berghoff's accusation is true, I'm not offended: Mr Kendrick is welcome to take it from me anytime he'd like, if you know what I mean.

JAKE TROUGHTON  
Arts 00

### The “S” is for students, not salesmen

I'm calling upon my fellow students to unite and rid our Student's Union Building of the outer world plague. SUB is a haven for us, the undergrads: a place where we may congregate and hide out from the pressures of society for a while.

We come to socialize, to chat, to eat, and to study with each other. This is our building. We welcome with open arms the people who are sympathetic to our purpose and are here to help us. We embrace student

groups who are here to create a unique experience for all of us. But what we don't want is the fucking plague of capitalists who come here to exploit us. It's a sad day when I can walk out of the Financial Aid office, turn a corner, and be confronted by somebody in a tie with no affiliation to the University who wants me to sign up for his fucking credit card.

I say we boycott these people. Tell them that they're not welcome here. If I want a credit card, I will go to the bank and get one. Don't come to me because I'll believe anything. If I want to buy some hippie shit, I will walk down Whyte and come to your store. If I want to shop at Costco, I will go to Costco.

As students, it's our responsibility to protect ourselves from this. Let's boycott these people. Ignore them completely, send them a message that we do not want them here because SUB is for the students.

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.