

THE "GUARDIAN" GUARDS MEDIOCRITY

STAN DALTON in collaboration with SINBAD FANYASTZ

Small minds discuss people; Average minds discuss events; Great minds discuss ideas.

One of most important elements in any society, regardless of its structure, is the various forms of media-newspaper, radio, television, etc. For any society to maintain itself it must keep its members aware and educated, especially in twentieth century society, where education is the key to harmonious co-existence with other peoples.

Although it is important that a newspaper keep its readers informed of contemporary events, it's most important function is to serve as a medium for the expression of its readers views on the most important issues confronting contemporary man; some of which will be transitory (i.e. issues peculiar to a certain era), others will be perpetual by virtue of the quest for human understanding which entails, truth, life, religion, justice, etc. Any newspaper of quality will address itself to these more important perennial problems

Some points I consider essential for a qualitative newspaper are:

- 1) its only criterion is TRUTH.
 - 2) Perennial HUMAN PROBLEMS are foremost
 - 3) it challenges its readers and, in turn, is open to their challenge, to set the ground for solid dialogue.
 - 4) its concerns transcends its particular social milieu and seriously challenges the views of OTHER PEOPLES whether near or far.
 - 5) it does not "let go" of an issue until answers are got - one way or the other.
 - 6) It DOES NOT shy away from POLITICS RELIGION, ECONOMICS, or any social issue of importance to anyone.
- These are but a few important characteristics of any qualitative newspaper.

In consideration of what has been thus far said, I would now like to concern myself with the central concern of this article: our own local newspaper- the "Guardian".

I am both appalled and disgusted by this cheap excuse for journalism. It consistently lets me down when I seek within its pages any semblance of concern and commitment for some of our most pressing problems.

Before I continue I would like to draw attention to an interesting article (Guardian -CRITICAL ESSAY by a UPEI student. This article, criticizes the "Guardian" on many points. Not only does he point out the

many and obvious typographical errors the "Guardian" is notorious for, but he makes some very interesting observations about its quality as a whole. I shall list some of these and offer further comment.

"The Guardian is a survivor of the papers whose raison d'etre was to be the mouthpiece of alcohol abstinence devotees. However, today's Guardian no longer is a staunch anti-alcohol campaigner. IT CAN PERHAPS BEST BE DESCRIBED AS A MIDDLE-OF-ROAD NEWSPAPER, UNCOMMITTED TO ANY OTHER CAUSE OTHER THAN THE WELL-BEING OF P.E.I. (Page 1, para 4) (italics mine).

The italicized sentence might rather be considered as saying that the "Guardian" is mediocre. As a mediocre paper (and that it most certainly is) it is not committed to anything except staying alive by not getting involved with "touchy" issues which may have a detrimental effect on its economic stature.

Furthermore, a mediocre paper, cannot be committed to the well-being of the Island by virtue of its mediocrity. If it were in fact committed to our well-being, it would take issue with those concerns of Islanders, namely: politics, religion, economics, etc. However, consider the next paragraph.

"The Guardian is by no means a first-rate paper as is say the New York Times or Toronto's Globe and Mail. BUT

IT REALLY HAS NO NEED TO BE, BECAUSE FIRST-RATE NEWS REPORTING IS NOT WHAT IS DEMANDED OF IT BY THE COMMUNITY" (italics mine - page 1, para. 5)

This does not exonerate the "Guardian" however; whether or not the people want a mediocre paper is not sufficient reason for acquiescence - unless, of course, those who operate the paper are themselves mediocre.

It is obvious, the people of P.E.I. do not want to assume their freedom, responsibility, and capacity for making decisions which the conscientious operation of a paper would entail. They, like most people, want to run away from themselves- and the "Guardian" does nothing to alter this. It would have a very significant effect if it would challenge its readers rather than just reflect their mediocrity.

"THE GUARDIAN FALLS SHORT IN THE FULFILLING OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY WHICH IS FIRST OF ALL TO TEACH." (italics mine. page 2, para.4)

Extensive comment is not required on this point-it is obvious to anyone who reads the "Guardian".

The editorials themselves are rather poor. The more thoughtful or more influential members of the newspaper's reading community are rarely stimulated by an original Guardian editorial. MANY COMMENTS ON THE EDITORIAL PAGE ARE OBVIOUSLY

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