

Letter to the Editor

Time to Vote
Out Politics
of Fear

The Editor:

At last Canadians can vote out the Harper/Bush strategy of fear mongering and war mongering. Then we can return to the well-proven wisdoms of:

1. using social programs and poverty reduction to promote justice and reduce crime and ill health;
2. using diplomacy and peacekeeping to solve international conflicts;
3. using investigation and dialogue to solve parliamentary problems; and
4. encouraging research and action to make a peaceful transition to living without fossil fuels.

They can run from the truth but they cannot hide!

Marion Copleston & Tony Reddin, Bonshaw

Why slashing just won't cut it anymore

In the past month, the federal Harper government has slashed funding to Arts societies and programs, relating primarily to film and media. This from the man who has professed to giving more attention to American political news than that relating to his own government. This has become a major issue for a group of Canadian actors who insist that our nation's history is profoundly steeped in culture and the arts, and considering the percentage of artists across the country, this cut to arts funding is a serious blow, a kick in the teeth to many Canadians who make the living through the arts medium. Much of our provincial funding not provided through farming,

fisheries and tourism, comes from the many forms of the arts provided by our myriad of local talent, and is the backbone of our beloved province.

In the past few years, here at UPEI, we've seen several new buildings erected, specifically the new School of Business and several Science buildings, in the name of promoting the distinct classes of Business and Science to the mainstream of our Island's focal point of education. Granted, with more money being spent on these areas, we might stand to gain a larger student population; a minute percentage. To a native of another province or nation, our custom of spending time -- and more importantly, money -- on something as undeniably

inapplicable to work environments outside university as Arts education, might seem "strange" or "weird" to someone founded and prided upon a stable Science degree. Granted, too, that selling our university to a Science student would be more profitable in terms of tuition than, say, a French language major, whose requirements are no more than a Professor and a classroom.

Ironically, to fund the construction of these new buildings, one might logically deduce that a good sum of the money must have come from the output of such artistic endeavours, and where does that leave us? We draw on the best mustard of creativity that our Island has known and

supplant it to provide resource to a relatively unfamiliar industry?

It's time to spawn a new Arts building, and one has been a long time coming; one that might sit on the mobile classrooms in the parking lot that many of our Arts students study in now. An Islander should be proud to take up the trade of craftsmanship at a school that has nurtured so many of his kind since its incarnation. For our music, sculpting, film-making, and independent artistry of all kinds, is our province recognised, and our Island heritage, not to mention the tourism industry, would not be the same without it.

The Steel Hall building is looking a bit outdated, too.

o Sebastian Baglolo

The war on guns is unwinnable if it ignores poverty, racism

Racism, on this continent, is rooted in a want of economic freedom. This economic deficiency is manifested through inadequate wages, a scarcity of affordable housing and quality childcare, and a host of other issues.

The lack of proper options, specifically a low minimum wage which does not allow a person to meet their basic needs, puts many people in a back-against-the-wall situation.

This is what leads youth, many of whom are visible minorities, to sell drugs or engage in other criminal activity in Canada. One would be hard-pressed to find a teenage drug dealer who would rather pursue a life of crime rather than attend a post-secondary institution.

But with tuition fees rising, and

more jobs being created that provide little or no benefits, many economically marginalized people need to seriously examine criminal activity as a means to provide economic security.

This has been the case for many years in Ontario, and many analysts link it to the funding cuts under Mike Harris' Conservative government in the 1990s.

But in recent years, the issue of gun use among those attempting to make ends meet through illegal activities has sharply increased, especially in Toronto.

The increased availability of handguns in the city, accompanied by the increase in gun violence, has created a reactionary backlash.

This backlash, which began with

the Boxing Day 2005 shooting of secondary school student Jane Creba, was taken to a new level a few weeks ago by Toronto mayor David Miller.

Taking his message to one of the new battleground of ideas, YouTube, Miller made an emotional appeal to all Canadians for support of his "call for a national handgun ban."

Miller missed an opportunity to properly tackle the problems of gun violence, poverty, and racism in Canada.

Putting so much effort into the "banning of ownership of handguns in this country" does not address the root of the problem.

Miller wants to take a step back to when those with their backs against

the wall struggled in an economically unjust system without the overwhelming use of handguns.

If the mayor gets his national handgun ban, the problems of high tuition fees, low living wages, and inadequate access to child care will still go unaddressed.

The fact that a disproportionate number of people of colour are seriously affected by these issues will still go unaddressed.

Miller has asked Canadians to answer his call for the banning of handguns. But the question remains, will he answer the call of economically disadvantaged Canadians to join their struggle for a more equal and less racist society?

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