

# ... And Now For Something Completely Different: The Rants of a University Student

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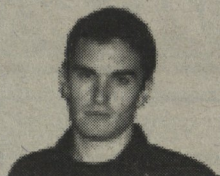
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Next meeting: Jan. 17, 2005 at 4:30 PM in Rm. 213, W.A. Murphy Student Centre

Ryan Gallant  
*Managing Editor*



So I think I've had just about as much as I can stand of people I don't know and relatives I've never seen pretending that they care what is going on in my life. "How's school going?" "Was Santa good to you?" Who the hell cares? Obviously you don't know enough about me to formulate a half-sensible question, so don't think I'll be offended if you spare me your stupid-ass and redundant questions. Frig.

Well, the Russians certainly had their asses handed to them last week as Canada decimated those communist show-boaters in the final game of the IIHF World Junior Championships. Canada once again showed that while we may suck at a lot of other stuff (i.e. NBA basketball, running a military, Celine Dion, etc.), that we are still the world super-power when it comes to hockey. Canada dominated the opposition throughout the tournament outscoring them 41-7 and capped the final game by demoralizing the Russians 6-1, winning for Canada its first World Juniors title in 8 years. "Eight years?" you say. "That doesn't seem like much of a super-power to me." Well that may be true, if Canada did not also hold the Olympic, World Cup and World Champion titles now as well.

It was announced this past month that Tom Ridge, the first ever director of the Department of Homeland Security in the US, will be stepping down rather than sticking around for another kick at the can with the administration of Bush n' friends. It has been said that Ridge's most decisive accomplishment in the 3 years since he took the position was creating the Homeland Security Advisory System, a system that indicates, based on intelligence, what the level of threat is of a terrorist attack in the US. Wow. Good job Tommy! You may as well retire, few get to savour the glory of creating a national colour-

coding scheme. And apparently it works. Not one foreign-sponsored terrorist attack has taken place on US soil since he took over the DHS. This could mean one of three things, 1) The "Elevated" (or "Yellow") level of Ridge's precious scale means squat, 2) assigning pretty colours according to threat levels can truly unite the US, in fear if nothing else, or 3) bombing 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries into the Stone Age works.

Anne McRae showed up her counterpart Paul Allen last month by proving that he was not the only dumb ass on island radio. I swear, I could not make this up: "The temperature was minus 7 degrees this morning but has now apparently gone up...to minus 8." Niiece.

Alright, so 9/10ths of the people that live on this island are totally insane. I mean, driving around town on a regular day is bad enough with the lack of signal use, with seniors driving Queen Vics at .2 kph and high school punks revving souped-up Civics and Neons up and down the Ave. But try dumping 50+ cm. in the middle of Boxing Day and you'll find the true meaning of semi-demonic morons. Inside the stores it went from bad to worse, and the peace and joy and love that people were preaching only the day before seemed to somehow get lost as they beat each other senseless with boxes to save 10% on wrapping paper and toaster ovens.

Well in the midst of the recovery effort following the tsunami in Asia on December 26<sup>th</sup>, the world showed an out-pouring of support for the victims of the disaster, sending money and aid to the region by the billions. By last week foreign aid workers were scrounging the rubble, manning field hospitals and helping in any way they could in the stricken regions. I certainly salute the grand gestures of the western world over the past few weeks, but it also makes me wonder, where the hell do we go when the disaster's over? Seriously, when CNN shuts off its cameras, how long will it take for us to stop caring? Last Friday, as the death toll in Asia was rising above 150,000, already no-

table news organizations...and the Guardian, were already turning to "more pressing" local issues. The front page Guardian, instead of pursuing the "old news" story of killer tsunamis, chose some guy in the Crick whose shed moved in a tidal surge and a picture of two guys in Stratford spraying hose water erratically on some outdoor rink. I mean come on, sure its hard to stay focussed on a disaster thousands of miles away when we could just as easily turn the page or switch the channel to Survivor, but this is a reality that millions of people live every day. I have heard many questions over the past week, "How can our government find \$80 million to send to them when we have problems here?" "Why didn't Asia just build a warning system?" It is an insult to compare shortfalls in healthcare or issues such as high tuition to the day-to-day lives of these people. And you're saying, "Yeah, here goes Ryan again, that commie bleeding-heart liberal." But I am not just talking about the pain in Asia. I am talking about the people who lived in huts on those beaches before the waves hit. The people who weren't even affected by the tsunami, and still have nothing. The millions of people in Africa who have died of AIDS, the thousands of people who will die today, who will die tomorrow and the next day of starvation and disease. What about Rwanda or Somalia? What about Sudan, where thousands have died in the past few months? How many people remember the earthquake in Bam, Iran in 2003 that killed 40,000 people? Now don't get me wrong, I'm not knocking the relief effort in Asia, nor would I trivialize an event as significant as September 11<sup>th</sup>, but thousands of people die needlessly every day. The out-pouring of aid in times of disaster seem oft more aimed at settling our guilt than actually fixing the problem. Getting off our asses to donate once every few years may placate out diluted conscience, but it doesn't feed the hungry nor save the dying.

