

Nipigon Gazette, June 09(ca), 1993

Your Opinion

the inside track

It's time to call a 'spade' a 'spade'

by Sandy Harbinson

When God created man and woman He did a real good job. In fact, He did a perfect job.

So what has happened twixt then and now, to cause the royal mess that now prevails.

We boast of democracy and then neglect the very basis of democratic philosophy, you know...the will of the majority...and all that stuff.

In today's society it's the minorities that call the shots, and it's proving a great detriment to the functional fibre of our previously purchased way of life. Purchased that is, by the very blood of our own sons, on the battlefields of the world.

If only they could see what their legacy has become in the hands of today's trustees.

Every self interest group with an axe to grind, is given the blessing, and the funding to aids their cause, by our various levels of government. Then, they proceed to hold the rest of the country to ransom, until we give in to their endless demands.

Today is Sunday. Still a relatively peaceful day of rest and relaxation for most of us...unless of course you happen to live in Toronto.

You see today, June 27, is Gay and Lesbian pride day. One of those minority groups that I was alluding to.

The whole practice is perverted and disgusting to begin with...let alone to be celebrated with pride.

I know that these people are God's children like the rest of us...but let's call a 'spade' a 'spade'.

They're perverts. Every last 'queer' one of them.

And today, they are holding a mass demonstration in Toronto, to show how proud they are of their perverted habits.

They. are going to lay down on the streets and have chalk outlines drawn around them, in protest of the lack of medical funding given over to their pet disease...AIDS.

Now don't misunderstand me, AIDS is a terrible disease, and it is not a gay illness anymore, due to the tainted blood supplies that were used during the early eighties, and the inadvertent contact with the results, by innocent victims.

I myself, through no fault of my own, contacted Hepatitis C as a result of bad blood, during a transfusion in 1982. Something that I have to live with to this very day.

AIDS may not be a gay disease anymore, but the initial spread was sure caused by the perverted actions of this "proud" group.

They have not only contributed to the moral decay of our society, but they have succeeded in making a total laughing-stock of our political system.

Phrases have been coined on official documents to cover the practices of these 'weirdo's'.

We now have to choose between 'husband' 'wife' or 'significant other' not to mention the references to 'sexual preference'.

Frankly the whole sad mess makes me want to up-chuck.

An old, slightly conservative friend of mine, suggested that a fenced-off area of Frobisher Bay, might be the ideal spot to send the lot them. Least-a-ways he says, it would cool their urges.

A judge in California had an unusual request brought before him when he was faced with pronouncing two gays "Man and Whatever." The groom (take your pick) wanted permission to have his horse be 'best man'. His Honour, tongue-in-cheek, and referring no doubt, to the two horses rear ends that were getting married, drawled in response..."oh, very well...I suppose we might as well have the whole horse present."

Reminds me of another story from that location when a guy wanted to marry his horse. The judge refused noting that the only statute that prevented this unholy union, was one that insisted the bride had to be at least 16 years old.

The filly...was only three.

By the way...the chalk wouldn't draw very well on the Toronto streets Sunday. They had thunderstorms...or was it someone voicing His disgust.



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Chronicle-Journal, Saturday, July 24, 1993

Publisher apologizes to gays

By GERRY POLING.

Of Our Staff

NIPIGON -- The Nipigon Gazette's publisher apologized Friday to the gay community for writing his newspaper that AIDS is the "pet disease" of homosexuals and that they were "perverts."

But Sandy Harbinson, who wrote a column in reference to Gay Pride and Lesbian Day in Toronto, still says gays are engaging in what he called "perverse" activities.

He hasn't changed his own personal opinion, he said. He made the apology on the advice of his employer, Laurentian Publishing Co., owners of The Nipigon Gazette, he explained.

"I still think what they (gays) are doing is perverse, but I apparently offended some people and have apologized," he said during an interview Friday. "I apparently overstepped the bounds of acceptable journalism. I had my views, but I shouldn't have expressed them as I did."

Thunder Bay gay activist Doug Broman said he is satisfied with the apology and has withdrawn his complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

"Even though a lot of people were hurt by this, we're satisfied Harbinson is showing a greater understanding of the situation and perhaps a more enlightened view -- a degree of wisdom."

Broman hoped people opposed to gay rights have learned a lesson from Harbinson's apology.

However, there is still a strong anti-gay feeling in the Thunder Bay area, added the activist.

"For example, when I was delivering a press release on this announcing my withdrawal of the complaint, I was chased down Court Street by a couple of guys."

Gay and Lesbian Pride Day occurred June 27 in Toronto. Harbinson's column, called The Inside Track, denounced the event June 29.

"They are going to lay down on the streets and have chalk outlines drawn around them, in protest of the lack of medical funding given over to their pet disease...AIDS," said the column.

It also added: "An old, slightly conservative friend of mine, suggested that a fenced-off area of Frobisher Bay, might be the ideal spot to send the lot of them. Least-a-ways, he says, it would cool their urges."

In Friday's interview, Harbinson said the column was a "gut reaction" to a TV news item on Gay and Lesbian Pride Day while he was writing his weekly column.

Broman, a former host of a local cable TV show called Thunder Gay Magazine, said considerable pressure was placed on Harbinson.

"I am told by friends in Nipigon and Toronto that he was deluged with a flood of complaints and support. Those objecting wrote letters, but those who supported his views apparently didn't, at least not in the numbers our people did."

Harbinson said he never expected the reaction against his column.

"I wasn't aiming at any one individual in particular, just the group," he said. "I never expected the reaction we got and our company advised me to try and call a halt to this thing."

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Chronicle-Journal, Saturday, July 24, 1993 (Letters)

Publisher's apology a surprise

AN APOLOGY by Nipigon-Red Rock Gazette for remarks made in a June 29 column that contained offensive remarks about gays, lesbians and persons affected by AIDS/HIV has surprised and gratified me.

After filing with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, seeking legal advice about whether or not the article violated Canada's hate laws and being in the process of preparing a complaint, with a number of others, to the Ontario Press Council, we are now withdrawing them.

We weren't out for blood, just tolerance.

In a short "Publisher's clarification," Harbinson didn't name the groups he offended nor the title and specific comments he had made that called for the forcible confinement of gays in Canada's arctic, called AIDS a "pet disease" of gays and blamed gays and lesbians for the ailments of the country.

Practically all the comments were very hateful; mocking those affected by AIDS/HIV was in extremely poor taste and scapegoating gays for problems touched raw nerves in a lot of people. It's gratifying that he was deluged by letters and comments.

Even though a lot of people were hurt by this, we're satisfied that Harbinson is showing a greater understanding of the situation and perhaps a more enlightened view, a degree of wisdom. It also proves that northerners are not stereotypical hicks and very tolerant around this issue.

We contribute billions of dollars to the economy and suffer the same ills as everyone else. The response indicates a warm and reassuring sense of goodwill. Though gays are often beaten, abused

and sometimes murdered, the vast majority of Canadians don't seem to echo the U.S. polarization and Balkan vindictiveness we hear so much about.

Harbinson wrote that "judging by the reaction of many people in response to my column in the June 29 edition, it is clear that I have overstepped the bounds of acceptable journalism. Those opinions expressed in the column were entirely my own and therefore I must accept responsibility for them and apologize to those who were offended . Sandy Harbinson, publisher."

DOUG BROMAN

Thunder Bay

Offense taken

The following letter was written prior to the apology issued by Gazette publisher Sandy Harbinson

First, I would like point out that most of the controversy over the column focused on the hateful remarks about gays and lesbians. But an equally serious assault made on minority groups.

I am offended by Harbinson's comment about this country being built on the "blood of our own sons," and that despite their victories minority groups now run the country.

I am a minority - an aboriginal person. I also served in the armed forces.

At a recent powwow our veterans raised the Canadian flag in honor of their fallen comrades. What they were fighting for? Was it so they could continue to be an oppressed, impoverished minority in Canada?

The reference shipping gays to the Arctic too painfully reminds me of the attitude 150 years ago when my people were called "freaks" and deemed unfit to participate in this democracy and were put aside.

We cannot let this kind of hatred find a new victim.

I feel that Harbinson has broken the ethical codes of conduct in publishing and I strongly feel that a resignation is in order.

TERRY BOUCHARD

Red Rock First Nation