



This week...

LETTERS

White power allegations

I've just finished reading the Mirror's interview with Tara Dribnenki and I have to admit I'm disappointed at the journalistic rigour that went into it ["White-power generator," Kristian Perspective, July 21].

The decision by Anti-Racist Action (ARA) in Montreal not to comment is no excuse for repeating as fact Ms. Dribnenki's allegations that they were responsible for assault, battery and break-and-entry in the absence of credible evidence to back this up. It may not have been intentional, but attributing serious criminal activity to a group without supporting it in the story is irresponsible.

Your columnist appears to have taken the allegations of someone who openly commends a physical attack on a "crack whore and unfit mother in a Montreal bar" and says that one of the reasons she can't move out of Montreal yet is because she still has to "smash reds" and then elevated those allegations to a status as though they came down with Moses from the Mount just because there's no one to gainsay it. (The first example is from Ms. Dribnenki posting as "love2hate" at the www.combat18.org forum and the second is from www.folkcom.com by Ms. Dribnenki posting as "Tara," left on the profile of "Der Totenkopf.")

Unless the Mirror had evidence that didn't make it into your story, ARA Montreal deserves an apology and retraction for these unsubstantiated allegations of serious criminality.

» **Richard Warman, Barrister and Solicitor, Ottawa**

Bestiality philosophy bites

With regards to the appalling comparison between the sexual abuse of women and children and the sexual use of a willing canine, I'd like to invite Sasha off her high horse ["Cross-species sex conundrum," Sasha, July 14].

I do, however, understand the impulse to find the nearest high horse when defending, even quasi-defending, dog-fucking.

That there are some commonalities as far as animals and humans are concerned does not make it a matter of equating humans and animals, or that animals "unequivocally deserve the same consideration as humans," so she should save her alleged horror at the comparison.

There are commonalities in some respects, including this one: the sexual abuse of women and children, and the sexual use of animals both turn on (no pun intended) naked power, tout court. Would Sasha condone the sexual use of a willing child? How about the sexual use of a willing, but mentally disabled, adult?

So the line seems to be drawn finally - and, dare I suggest, illogically - at the human/non-human divide. I ask her to rationalize that one. Careful, she might find herself in strange philosophical company. I admit, our general use of animals is so appalling, that adding sexual use to the list might arguably be rationalized into a minor addendum. And please, don't drag out the but-my-dog-humped-my-leg justification - since when do we model our actions on animals'?

Truth is, I don't buy Sasha's jury's-out stance at all. I appreciate the desire to come off all sexual-libertarian, given the sex-columnist gig, but a little to-thine-own-self-be-true would be the really gutsy thing to do. She's right, that dastardly liberal "it feels wrong" isn't philosophically sufficient, and feelings alone do not reliable ethics make. But they shouldn't be ignored or erased either; they may actually be the first hint that something is - get ready - wrong. Philosophical sifting can help with clarification.

Don't sell yourself out, Sasha, it's the only self you got.

» **Rachel Shine**

Gay for Montreal

I arrived in Montreal last weekend for the gay pride celebrations. I came here once as a kid, with my family - I was 12 and still in the closet - so I feel like this is my first time. I've heard so many things and now I've truly lost my Montreal virginity and it's awesome!

Your city is truly terrific. People are friendly, open-minded, fun-loving, and nobody seems to care if you're gay, straight or somewhere in between. Unlike many pride parades I've been to, the one last night didn't feel like it was out to challenge the status quo, it felt like a genuine celebration of something that isn't so controversial anymore. I guess I'd have expected this much in a country that just legalized gay marriage. You even put hot man ass on the cover of your paper! As progressive as alternative weeklies in the States might be, that is not something you'll find very easily. Thanks, Montreal!

» **Jay Stephenson, Baltimore, Maryland**

How not to pick up girls

I'm not sure George Panopoulos got the joke ["Pick-up pickle," Letters, July 21]. If you go up to a girl and criticize her in the hopes of gaining influence and eventually getting in her pants, she's going to laugh in your face - if she even bothers to do anything. Tell her something honest, buddy. Just a word of advice, though you already seem like a lost cause.

» **Pascal Nadeau**

Correction:

The name of the photographer, Jimmy Hamelin, who shot the Hansel and Gretel scenes for Anadama ["The id couple"] was inadvertently omitted from the credits in the July 21 issue.

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