

C-FAR NEWSLETTER

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Somehow, It's Still Our Fault

In the fall of 2002, **Usma Nu-Chah-Nulth Community and Human Services** fostered 19-month-old **Sherry Charlie** and her brother to the home of their uncle, **Ryan Dexter George**. While the agency fulfilled a mandate to keep aboriginal children with aboriginal families -- even meeting "kith and kin" placement guidelines -- the little girl was dead within the month. The uncle initially told police Sherry's brother had pushed her down the stairs, but would admit, two years on, that he had kicked her and slammed her head into the floor, "because she wouldn't stop crying." It also emerged that George had a record for robbery with violence and arson, and was on parole for "spousal abuse" at the time of the placement. An immediate howl went up: Why hadn't **Gordon Campbell's Liberal** government disclosed George's propensity for violence to the **Usma Nu-Chah-Nulth** agency? That is, privacy legislation should be waived when aboriginals whistle. But haven't Canadians been told repeatedly that aboriginal welfare should be the exclusive preserve of other aboriginals because they -- and *only* they -- have a finger on the pulse of the community and no outside agency can know their communities so intimately? And, with the exception of George's sentence of 10 years in pokey (rather than a healing circle) following his belated guilty plea, this tragic placement was handled in classically ethno-sensitive terms. The provincial government, and everyone else, recently came in for more criticism: **Nuu-Cchah-Nulth** chiefs and elders, "said the constant mention of Sherry's name and publication of her photograph breaks cultural practices of silence surrounding grieving. [Although] Sherry's mother, **Julie Frank** ... said she *wants* her daughter's name used in public if it protects other children from Sherry's fate, ... Chief **Judith Sayers** of the **Hupacasath First Nation** near Port Alberni said island aboriginals have a tradition of mourning that involves keeping silent about the deceased person for at least one year. It includes putting away photos and other memorabilia that could bring back memories of the person, she said. Sayers said the aboriginals are looking for answers in Sherry's case themselves and the request for silence has nothing to do with preventing investigations." (**Canadian Press**, October 8, 2005) According to this selective logic, even though the little girl has been dead for more than three years, the actual year of silence and suppressed photographs hasn't yet commenced. If the tradition-bounds natives had been a little less silent about child abuse in their community, little Sherry might still be alive.

White Ribbon, White Feather

December 6 is an official day of mourning across Canada: Flags fly at half mast to commemorate the 14 female students killed during **Marc Lépine's** 20-minute rampage through Montreal's **École Polytechnique** in 1989. The event was instantly seized on to advance two views: the feminist one that men are innately violent misogynists and the control-freaks' that Canada was due for a mandatory gun registry anyway. The firearm boondoggle, as it's usually called, may have spared a lot of ducks but has by no means cut into drive-by shooting and stairwell execution industries. Rather than go along with the opportunists who greet every tragedy with a bound and a whoop of joy, (Watch us parlay *this* one into funding and legislation!) a less conformist nation might have asked itself some searching questions: Was it really a good idea to raise a generation of boys so wholly in

touch with their feminine side? And, what were the "root causes" of **Marc Lépine**? No one's ever disputed that he was a violent nutter (although it should be noted that his grudge was against feminists, not women in general). Nevertheless, when he and his gun appeared in the doorway of the first classroom, 48 fit young men meekly filed out, leaving Lépine to open fire on the abandoned women. Would the gunman have found earlier (incorrectly nurtured) generations of Canadian men cowering in the hall as he swept past them on to the rest of the building? A second, painstakingly unexamined aspect of the case is that up to age 13, Marc Lépine was **Gamil Gharbi**. His father, Algerian immigrant **Rachid Liass Gharbi**, was a drunken batterer of his children and their mother, Quebecoise **Monique Lépine**. Gamil changed his name when the dysfunctional family dissolved. The implications of admitting thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of people from violently lawless regions is something Ottawa does not care to examine: Algeria's blood-steeped history extends well beyond its current status as throat-slitting capital of the world. But under the circumstances is a second generation mass murderer a surprise? The symbol of the white ribbon was adopted by feminist males within weeks of the shootings, presumably as *something* modern men felt they could do to show their concern and support (and after some initial sparring, now understand that they must occupy a minor supporting role on Dec 6 to avoid the impression that they are "taking attention away from women's groups"). As for *modern men cringing in hallways while women are picked off* at leisure, the white feather might be more appropriate: The single white feather as a symbol of cowardice derives from cockfighting and the belief that a cockerel sporting a white feather in its tail is likely to be a poor fighter. Pure-breed gamecocks don't show white feathers. So, its presence indicates that the cockerel is an inferior cross-breed. Perhaps it could change its name?

Don't Believe It

With so much depending on context, previous question, and the high proportion of people who now refuse to speak with pollsters, most of us weigh poll results with a healthy skepticism. However, few examples are as scandalously biased as the "**Canadian Values Study**", a joint project of the **National Post**, the **Dominion Institute** and **Innovative Research Group** [which] found 75% of respondents believe people should decide for themselves what is right without government interference. [Well, so far so good, but the data now takes a nasty turn, telling us more about the pollster than the opinions of Canadians.] *Even* among social conservatives and the highly religious, there is little support for imposing community moral standards. ... For example, 34% of respondents considered gay sex immoral. But of those people, only 41% believe the government should legislate moral standards. Similarly, among the 26% of people who believe a woman's place is in the home, only 30% supported enshrining moral standards in the law. Legislating morality is an equally unpopular idea among the 32% of Canadians who said religion is very important to their lives. Just 39% of the highly religious said government should legislate moral standards, with most mainstream church members, including 77% of Catholics, saying people should be left to make their own moral decisions. Based on these results, it is unlikely any political party will ever gain widespread support by espousing socially conservative viewpoints, according to [the managing director of **Innovative Research Group**, **Greg Lyle**." (**National Post**, September 26, 2005) It does not seem to occur to any of the principals that the results may be susceptible of other interpretations: Might the highly moral among us be opposed to

government legislated morality simply because they disapprove of the government's definition of morality? More problematic is the pollsters' assumption that the moral among us are constitutionally inclined to impose their views on others. Might the moral be *less* inclined to do so? Or doesn't that conform to the rigidity template? Canadians have certainly seen plenty of the least moral among us inflicting their values on society at large. To conclude from this series of flawed assumptions that no political party could ever win espousing socially conservative values is to reach a wholly unwarranted conclusion: The one clear consensus in the poll is that 75% of us do not want morality legislated. It simply does not follow that the majority, therefore, wants a government that is malign and malfasant. If the moral are indeed *less* inclined to impose their morality on others, shouldn't the conclusion be that they might be an ideal governing party? It would make a change.

Duty Free Native Discount

"The following information was taken from the Border Crossing Rights Between The United States and Canada for Aboriginal People handbook. When at any American or Canadian border, once you have been able to prove that you have at least 50 percent Aboriginal blood, this could be done by providing the border guard with a letter from the Band Council stating that you fulfil that condition; your certificate of **Indian Status Card** (Band card), your long-form birth certificate, or a photo **ID**. Then you have the right to cross the American and Canadian border freely. If you are an Aboriginal person who was born in Canada and have at least 50 per cent Aboriginal [sic] blood, you have the right to enter the U.S. to live or to work, if you so please. You may wonder what exactly you need to work in the States. According to the handbook, it is very important that you first obtain your **American Social Security Card**. Like Canada, in the States, you need a **Social Security Number** to be able to work in the country. When you apply for work in the U.S., you should be prepared to provide the employer with *your blood quantum letter*; and at least one of the following: Social Security Card, Canadian or U.S. driver's licence, school **ID** card or a **U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner** card. As an Aboriginal person, you are eligible for public benefits, such as **Medicaid** ... **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**. ... Aboriginal people also qualify for **Medicare**, Unemployment benefits, and other Public Assistance, provided that you meet the proper guidelines of the American or Canadian agency. ... You do not have to be processed for an alien registration card (also known as the 1-551, or more commonly known as the green card.) Also, you do not have to obtain a work permit in either country, and you do not have to register for the military. The U.S. Government is also unable to deport you, exclude you from entry or deny you service. ... As long as you have at least 50 percent Aboriginal blood, you are at present subject to U.S. customs duties. The **Jay Treaty** states 'nor shall Indians passing or repassing with their own proper goods and effects of whatever nature pay for the same and duty or import whatever.'" (The Eastern Door, Kahnawake Mohawk Reserve, undated) Add to that, "non-insured health benefits such as dental, vision and prescription needs, and certain tax exemptions. ... In 1993, a study commissioned by **INAC [Indian and Northern Affairs]** suggested the financial losses to government, both federal and provincial, as a result of misuse and misapplication of the status card may exceed \$62 million annually." (Indian and Northern Affairs, Indian Registration System backgrounder) Life is tough for privileged people!

Less Bang, More Buck

With consumer debt in Canada reaching an all-time record of \$875-billion, "there's really little to celebrate over this year's **Tax Freedom Day**, which [fell] on June 26. The bottom line is **Tax**

Freedom Day has been slipping, from June 19 in 2001 to June 26 this year, with average families forking out \$1,194 *more* in taxes from 2004 to 2005, according to the **Fraser Institute**. ... Calculations, done annually since 1977, are not intended to measure the benefits Canadians receive from governments, but rather the price they pay for government. [For instance,] our tax dollars found in secret, brown envelopes, \$1 billion in missing **HRDC** money, **AdScam**, a botched gun registry, not to mention the state of our health-care system with clogged emergency rooms and ambulances being turned away. [Nevertheless,] the tax burden paid for health care, pensions and social security jumped 19% from 2004 to 2005. ... The report also shows that in six provinces **Tax Freedom Day** comes later than ever, including Ontario. ... An average Ontario family with two or more individuals bringing in income of \$83,265 will pay out \$38,835 in total taxes this year. ... The earliest **Tax Freedom Day** of June 13 was found in sales-tax-free Alberta. ... In fact, the day Albertans are free from taxes has declined an amazing 11 days from 2000 to 2005. The latest was Quebec, where they won't celebrate **Tax Freedom Day** until July 7." (Toronto Sun, June 25, 2005) Meanwhile, "the **Royal Bank of Canada's** economics department just rolled out its latest provincial trends. 'Alberta and British Columbia were responsible for **80%** of the new jobs created in the first quarter.'" (Edmonton Sun, June 26, 2005)

Pure Laine City Hall

Evidently the usual suspects manage to duck even Ottawa's biggest brainstorms: Montreal's "Mayor **Gerald Tremblay** pledged to hire 1,000 women, aboriginal people and members of visible or ethnic minorities for Montreal's workforce over three years. Instead, the city's record shows a string of zeroes in most categories. ... The city only began tracking hiring of minorities and women in January [but] no woman from an ethnic minority -- defined as a person with a mother tongue other than English or French -- got a permanent job at the city this year, the numbers show. No woman from a visible minority -- that is, non-White -- got a permanent job. And no aboriginal person got a permanent or temporary job. ... A recent city census showed visible minorities make up 5.59 per cent, or 1,603, of the city's 28,684 employees, while ethnic minorities number another 1,680, or 5.86 per cent. The 2001 Canadian census says 21 per cent of Montrealers are visible minorities and 29 per cent are ethnic minorities. [Oh well, the important thing is to twist the nose of the *maudit Anglais*...] The city does not track hiring of anglophones because, it argues, the province's 2001 employment-equity law does not target English-speaking Quebecers." (Montreal Gazette, June 9, 2005) How convenient!

The Pearl Of The Antilles

The perennial question: Why is post-liberation Haiti such a violent basket-case? The not so surprising answer: Don't blame us, blame the **US**. Canada has issued an advisory against travel to Haiti after a Montreal woman was kidnapped and tortured for a reported \$300,000 ransom. Haitian captors, however, are willing to dicker and often settle for a few hundred dollars: "At least 130 people were kidnapped in the capital Port-au-Prince in April. ... An average of four people are kidnapped each day. ... Haitian officials blame many of the kidnappings on well-armed pro-Aristide street gangs but said drug-traffickers, corrupt police and an influx of criminal deportees from the United States are also involved. 'Some of these guys were not even born in Haiti but their parents were Haitians,' interim prime minister **Gerard Latortue** said recently, urging U.S. authorities to stop sending back criminals of Haitian decent." (Canadian Press, June 18, 2005) Jamaica has played the same card repeatedly. Wonder what our new Governor-General Haitian import Michaele Jean has to say about the lawlessness in the land of her birth?