

WORD'S WORTH

With Eric Balkind



Watch out for big brother

The longer I live the more I become aware of the ways in which our lives are controlled, and to a large extent directed, by those who have the power to restrict access to information and by others who do not want their particular versions of "the truth" questioned. Recent examples of this deliberate and insidious means of control are worthy of serious consideration.

The CBC series on the second World War entitled "The Valour and the Horror" has been variously acclaimed by some and mauled by others across the country. That is what we should expect when a usually-accepted version of history is questioned. However, so strongly did some complain about the portrayal of allied bombing raids on Germany that they managed to persuade that laughable sinecure known as the Canadian Senate to put the series under scrutiny at its own version of what appeared perilously close to being a kangaroo court.

Just weeks back, Ontarians were subjected to the most peculiar court decision in living memory when a judge decided that a certain TV presentation-to-be was, so to speak, not-to-be. The secretive judge apparently ruled that a particular program which was not to be named publicly was not to be aired; moreover, the site of the hearing and the name of the judge herself were also to be kept under wraps. Thankfully, an appeal overthrew at least the obsessive secrecy surrounding this pernicious ruling and we now know that the program in question was entitled "The Boys of St. Vincent" but — we still haven't seen it here in good, old Ontario.

In Montreal, there lives a man who has agonized, for the past 50 years, over the fate of his sister. Within the past week, this 80-year-old Canadian learned that during the second World War his sister had been turned over to the Nazis by the British administrator on the island of Guernsey; subsequently, she died in Auschwitz. In answer to the official enemy request for the names of Jews living in Guernsey in 1940, the island's bailiff wrote, "I can assure you there will be no delay, insofar as I am concerned, in furnishing you with the information you require." After the war, this British turkey was knighted. What is of enormous import is the fact that authorities had managed to suppress the Guernsey files for some 53 years.

The above examples are but the very thin edge of the wedge and, to be honest, they probably "ain't nuttin'" compared to the propaganda job which was perpetrated on us during the so-called Gulf War. What surely needs to be recognized is that knowledge is power and, when authority can act to limit what is known or when information can be distorted or called into question so as to suit the needs of the few, then the majority may actually suffer or perhaps even countenance activities which normally they simply would not accept.

The right to seek the truth wherever it may be found by researching and by questioning is possibly freedom's most powerful safeguard. Every time we allow the few to dictate what we may know and when we may know it, we place ourselves deep in the you-know-what. The nice word for that, of course, is jeopardy. The choice is ours.

Wit & Wisdom

What is truth and just what is true? It seems that the passing of time has a habit of calling into question some of our oldest and dearest verities. Never mind or, at the very least keep an open mind and, wonder of wonders, you might just find out that you were wrong.

Truth is mighty and will prevail.

— Thomas Brooks in 1662

Time is precious, but truth is more precious than time.

— Benjamin Disraeli

All great truths begin as blasphemies.

— George Bernard Shaw

Truth forever on the scaffold. Wrong forever on the throne.

— Lowell in *The Present Crisis*

"It was as true," said Mr. Barkis, ... "as taxes is. And nothing's truer than them."

— Dickens in *David Copperfield*



LETTERS

Thanks for the parade

To the Editor:

On behalf of Robert Little Public School students, staff and parents, let me take this opportunity to thank the Acton Fire Fighters Association for organizing the Santa Claus Parade. We certainly enjoyed the

fun. Each year the parade is well organized through the capable work of the volunteers. Special thanks goes to William Spielvogel, who heads up this group.

Each year we look forward to the parade. Each year we take their efforts for granted. Many thanks.

By the way, the prize money was used to give the children a Christmas present of a movie, popcorn and pop.

Community events like a parade help us to weather life's storms.

P. Hynds,
Robert Little P.S.

A smoker's lament

To the Editor:

I would like to offer some suggestions to the beleaguered, hard-working, law-abiding, tax-paying smokers in our society.

In view of the cruel and unusual treatment we are receiving, a good course of action might be for all of us to quit work, apply for welfare and frequent the food banks. After a few months of supporting the country and its "despicable addicts" by themselves, the anti-smoking fanatics might see things differently.

An alternative would be to smoke in the forbidden areas as often as we can and refuse to pay fines when we are charged. With luck, we would eventually be put into prison where we could enjoy an all-expense paid vacation and smoke our heads off on tax-free cigarettes like the rest of the criminals.

Another idea is to create a new language, obtain a club house and wear nicotine stains in conspicuous places. We could then claim special status, apply for a government grant and sue anyone who looked at us the wrong way for

discrimination. Maybe we could find a reference to smoking in some Holy Book or other and claim to smoke for religious reasons.

If all else fails, the non-smokers might wish to pass a law having us deported to Russia, where smoking is considered to be civilized. If it comes to that, I just hope and pray we would not be transported on a smoke-free airline!

Sincerely, Eileen Hutcheson,
Knox Avenue



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