

## Voice of the People

### **He'll be missed**

I was saddened to learn of the death of Bob Switzer, longtime owner of Halifax's Taz records (The Sunday Herald, April 3).

Like many people, I first met Bob during the 1970s at the Dal cafeteria, where he regularly sat with a coffee, a cigarette and an armful of records. At the time, my knowledge of the blues extended only to B.B. King and a few other well-known names. Bob took me under his wing, like many other youngsters, and introduced me to a much larger world of music.

Visiting his home was a virtual tour through a rhythm and blues museum.

Through the later decades, we got to know each other as friends, and one of the high points of my Halifax visits was always a trip to visit Bob at Taz records. At heart, Bob was a gentle, nice guy who was humble about his knowledge and who, perhaps, did not realize how many people he truly influenced.

Halifax and the world have lost one of their original personalities and a pioneer of the retail record business. Those who knew him well have lost a dear friend, mentor and original presence in our lives.

Rest in peace, Bob, and give our regards to T-Bone and Hank.

Sam King, Pembroke, N.H.

### **Stuck in past**

Re: Chantal Hebert's column, "Quebec language law made bulletproof" (The Sunday Herald, April 3).

Quebec legislators make bad decisions because the rest of Canada is ignorant enough to subsidize their folly. Regardless, when is Quebec going to grow up?

My heart goes out to those francophones in Quebec who want to move the province forward into a vibrant, challenging and exciting part of the world instead of being legislated into a preserved and withering antique.

Quebec missed the opportunity to become this vibrant society around 1967, when it was at its pinnacle. The future was Quebec's. Montreal was without doubt the cultural and economic engine of Canada. However, Canada's

leaders decided to focus on a small group of militant separatists and the rest is history.

Quebec leaders decided to protect their children from the English language. How has Quebec fared? It is not unusual to meet intelligent Quebecers in their 20s who cannot converse in English.

Meanwhile, English Canada is surging forward, even with the ball and chain of Quebec. Look at the multiculturalism and economic power of Vancouver, Calgary or Toronto.

Quebec's advantage in Canada has been its ability to secure key federal decision-making positions due to its bilingualism. This advantage will eventually disappear under Bill 101 as English Canada produces more bilingual children than Quebec.

Quebec will become like the backward child in the home, dependent on the kindness and generosity of others. However, will Canadians always be so generous?

John McCaffery, Lower Sackville

## **No such thing**

There is no such thing as "commercial sex" (Peter Duffy's column, The Sunday Herald, April 3). There is not a "seller" and a "buyer." There is the exploited and the exploiter. In the case of women and girls who are trafficked into sexual slavery, there is a victim and a rapist.

"No one gets hurt; lives aren't destroyed," Duffy writes. The vast majority of prostitutes are hurt and destroyed; otherwise, they wouldn't be selling their bodies. That's what prostitution is: the buying and selling of female bodies, not of sex.

Perhaps the most depressing and frightening aspect of the sex-slave industry is that the men who buy the bodies of these trafficked women and girls are ordinary, seemingly normal men with wives and daughters. How can you trust anyone?

The women and girls forced to sell their bodies to survive due to poverty are no less victimized. It's the powerful exploiting the powerless.

It's too easy to compartmentalize evil and direct it at people who are "different." In reality, the only thing that separates ordinary women from prostitutes is a roof over their heads and food on the table. No one knows what they would do if they were cold, hungry or homeless.

Think of the women and girls who were forced to sell their bodies because of the poverty and starvation after the Second World War. Many of them were well-educated and from middle-class families. Imagine the horror and degradation of being forced to submit to unwanted sex acts in order to

survive.

Despite male fantasies, that's what prostitution is really about: poverty and degradation.

M.M. MacDonald, North Sydney

## **Rerouting revenue**

As a recent CFA (come-from-away), I was horrified to find the extent to which video lottery terminals have become habitual entertainment for what appears to be a segment of the population that can least afford to be throwing money away, at the same time realizing that this pastime provides windfall income to a hard-pressed provincial treasury purse.

Now that the Hamm government has recognized the deleterious effect these ubiquitous gambling machines can have on the working populace, I should be happy - but I'm not.

After privately praising the government for addressing the scourge, I realized that a good chunk of the dough being pumped into the provincial coffers may now go offshore as the gambling junkies simply move from the bar stool to the comfy chair in front of the home computer.

I have no immediate answer to this conundrum, but the rerouting of revenues is no answer and therefore, does not address the problem - other than from a government PR standpoint.

Can the government attach a sin tax or transactional tax on online gambling bets? Can EastLink and Aliant monitor gambling activity and place a surcharge on access to certain sites?

I doubt either is possible, for a range of reasons; but the gravity of the issue, socio-economic and treasury benefits need to be addressed before hard decisions are made. If not, well, we simply transfer the revenues to offshore, online gambling sites, while continuing to incur the damage unfettered gambling produces.

David Farrell, Halifax

## **United we stand**

Re: the letter by Donna Whitman in the April 3 edition of The Sunday Herald.

I have been a lifelong, faithful Anglican and am in complete agreement with her letter.

Not knowing, I cannot comment on Father Craig Botterill or the Saint Aidan Anglican Catholic Church, and I cannot understand their decision to

divide or to express their dislike of the rest of our churches. I think, though, it is totally unchristian.

Donna, please stay with our church; we need you and many like yourself, so devoted to our faith.

Just a thought for Father Botterill and his little group: When our Lord lived on Earth, He prayed that we all may be one, as He and His Father in heaven are one.

During our Sunday worship, with our beloved Bishop Fred Hiltz assisted by Archdeacon Peter Armstrong, we all reaffirmed our baptismal vows. We have gained new strength to remain united and strong to face all the concerns in the future.

Anne Hendsbee, Halifax

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