

# THE FREE PRESS MAIL BAG

Page A9

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PHONE 564-0005

## STREETWISDOM

**What do you think should be done to help clean up the Fraser River?**



**Eric Robichaud**

"There is probably something that can be done, some campaign thing, some voluntary thing. Have everyone gather for a weekend and help clean up."



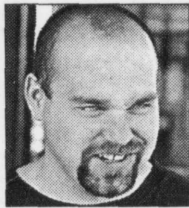
**Par Helmer**

"I'm from Sweden myself and what we've done is to send out volunteers. I don't know who would organize such a program, though."



**Bobbie Gosh**

"I'll be radical. Close down Vancouver. Most of the problems are at that end and not up here. We should slow development down there."



**Jeremy Cundy**

"I went down there once and found syringes and stuff. We've got people in jail, maybe we should try and get them to do something."

## ▼ Fertility

### Just because technology exists, doesn't mean we have to use it

#### Editor:

I felt I must reply to the rather incoherent arguments put forward by Celeste Glassel concerning Bill C-47 - the Human Reproductive and Genetic Technologies Act.

This bill would forbid sex-selection abortions, the sale of ovum, sperm and embryos, commercial surrogate motherhood, and research on embryos over 14 days past conception. It also bans genetic tinkering that could be passed on to a person's descendants, development of babies outside of the womb, human cloning, formation of animal-human hybrids, or the retrieval of eggs from fetuses or cadavers.

What the act does not do is decide who should or should not have children. Government is not God Almighty - much as they like to assume that role in other areas.

I suspect from the unhappy tone of her letter that Ms. Glassel is one of the unfortunate women who for one reason or another is unable to conceive or bear a child without the use of extraordinary

means. If true, she has my profound sympathy. However, children are not an inherent right we are entitled to. Nor are children commodities to be bought or sold in the market place.

Contrary to her assertions, a large number of people are responsible for their own infertility. Much infertility is caused by sexually transmitted disease - the result of a promiscuous lifestyle. A significant amount of infertility can also be attributed to damage caused by abortion. The tribulation of the sex drive to something to be satisfied as easily as we satisfy our hunger has led to epidemic numbers of people being unable to have children. Unfortunately,

some couples will do anything - including the use of unethical means, to have a child. The fact that they can afford to pay for such means points to the need for legislation prohibiting these practices.

The bill has some glaring inconsistencies. It claims to protect the dignity of human life but still allows abortion at any stage of pregnancy for reasons of convenience. This is schizophrenic to say the least. Why are 15-day-old embryos sacred and to be protected from experimentation, but 13-day-old embryos are not? Why are there no limits on the number of children fathered by donor sperm? These issues are not adequately addressed to my mind.

There are many things technology is making possible for us to do. However, the ability to do them does not mean they should be done, despite the strength of our desires.

Sincerely,  
C. Grenon

**However, children are not an inherent right we are entitled to. Nor are children commodities to be bought or sold in the market place.**

## Bible not the law for all Canadians

#### Editor:

While I am somewhat in the dark regarding the two-tier killer classification that is the subject of the letter I am responding to, I am moved to comment on the biblical interpolation suggested by your reader.

When last I checked, Canada was a secular society, meaning that there is supposed to be a separation of church and state. While I realize that this country was founded on a colonial practice effected and legitimized by what can be called a corporate Christianity bent on seeing the world acknowledge its own supposed superiority, I would like to think that in this day and age of "multiculturalism" we are free of the constraints of those who wish to proselytize and force one religious view into the public sphere.

J.C. Beitz is free to have his or her own religious views, but to suggest that the Judeo-Christian god is the first and final arbiter for Canada's criminal justice system is both ignorant and disrespectful. The Bible is just a book that some people happen to believe is true - not all. I would suggest to J.C. Beitz that it is time for all Christians to realize that they do not have a functional monopoly on what is just and true.

Sincerely,  
Robert Luke

## 'Clean' MDF plant would have support

#### Editor:

(The original of this letter was sent to then-environment minister Moe Sihota)

My contention that the Environmental Assessment Act does not make public participation mandatory still stands. A project committee which holds meetings away from the eyes and ears of the public is not the same thing as public participation. Reviewing and commenting is not the same thing as participating and contributing. The result of this inadequate process is what you see happening now with regard to the Huckleberry mine.

It has come to our attention from people involved in the MDF plant issue in Prince George that the Environmental Assessment Act is about to be "streamlined." This is totally unacceptable, as I'm sure you can imagine. Corporate pressure is no doubt urging you to treat us as "Third World" countries are currently being treated. As if we don't know what is good for us or what will prove employment to our young people.

These same plants have been shut down in California and other states because the technology was available for a "clean plant" but the companies refused to use it. Now they are prowling the world looking for places that are backward enough to accept more pollution. I suggest to you that this is not such a place.

Prince George has put up with enough degradation of its environment by people who think that their bank accounts are more important than our health. Insist on a "clean plant" and we will be happy to support a MDF plant.

Sincerely,  
Carolyn Linden  
Nechako Environmental Coalition

## Write On!

The Free Press welcomes letters to the editor but we reserve the right to edit for brevity, clarity, legality and good taste. Letters should be 250 words, preferably typewritten, and must include the name, address and phone number of the letter (for verification purposes only).

Letters can be sent by mail, fax (562-0025) or e-mail (letters@pgfreepress.com)