

Subject:
Date: Fri, 25 Mar 2005 11:59:04 -0800
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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

The recent Art display in the District Hall has turned into a heated controversy. It is all about an artist displaying some paintings in the District Hall showing nude females.

It caused a furor. Through his medium, the artist suggested that, in this society women are being treated as sex objects and are often the victims of violence. To make the point he not only painted them in the nude but also put a whole bunch of guns onto the canvas. It was his way of putting up a mirror in front of our eyes. That is what artists do. Some of them are better than others. Some people demanded that this "nonsense" should be removed from the Municipal Hall. When it comes to nudity, Michelangelo had the same problem with the Pope when he painted the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo tried to convince the Pope that nudity was not a sin. He was sure, he said that when God created woman he did not look the other way. Otherwise, he said, how could he have done such good job. I could not tell you whether the paintings in the Hall are great or not anymore than I could tell you whether a bottle of wine is good or not until I taste it and you sure can't taste a painting, can you.

However, it makes me wonder why nobody supported my motions opposing gratuitous and corporate sponsored violence on TV where people are pushed, punched, shoved, shot, burned and kicked every 6 seconds or so. What is good for the goose should be good for the gander. After all the artist never advocated sexual exploitation or violence. He put on canvass only what he perceived as being the truth. He merely put a mirror in front of the community.

But where the real problem came in is when I suggested that to avoid any future confusion and misunderstanding they should spell out what the criteria should be for allowing paintings to be placed in the Municipal Hall. It would help the artists and the people who are responsible for organising these shows and also our own staff and Council. Maybe the committee would suggest that only paintings depicting trees and blueberry bushes should be displayed, I said. Spell out what is acceptable and what is not, I said. The people who were opposed to the paintings said this was not necessary since we already had a policy in place. It is called the positive workplace policy which states that any kind of sexism is verboten.

I have some difficulties with this. For one thing the artist is not guilty. He neither committed any violence nor did he glorify it. Neither did he glorify the sexual exploitation of women as is done on TV while corporations have a jolly good time showing off their products. Still, the paintings had to go. But the question remains. What is acceptable and what is not. My motion to find out will come up sometime in April. The people who have demanded the removal of the paintings have already stated that they will not support my motion to find out from the community what is and what is not acceptable. Why take a chance. They, would rather wait until another messenger shows up so they can shoot him too.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist



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