

1.

Letter to the editor.

May 10th 2000

I would like to comment on the recent rave hysteria in Toronto and Mayor Lastman's moves to ban these public events.

I have just spent the last few years writing, publishing and distributing a book about rave culture. During the process of researching this project, I conducted hundreds of interviews with ravers, promoters and Djs from more than thirty countries and discovered the global rave phenomenon to be a potent and positive youth movement.

Rave preaches acceptance, tolerance and understanding, and places a strong emphasis on close friendships, family and community. Values that we would do well to foster in a society rife with division, intolerance, and fractured families.

In the last ten years rave has grown from an underground subculture to an international cultural movement with a unified vision and a global sense of community. Rave is not only responsible for producing the first new music in twenty years but also represents a new sensibility in the areas of fashion, politics, philosophy, business, and sexuality.

Contrary to the popular press, ravers are not just a bunch of drugged-out teenagers. They are a new generation who are well informed, politically aware, socially motivated and foster an optimistic vision of the future.

I was disappointed to hear recently that there was a move afoot in Toronto to effectively ban raves. I think that it's very important to be clear about exactly what is being banned or restricted here. Are we banning electronic dance music? or all night dancing? or glow beads? And if we are banning raves on the speculative suspicion that some people *may* take illegal drugs, we are in direct violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which grants us the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

And if suspected drug use is the real issue here, then we must be prepared to apply the same criterion to other public events where illegal drugs are consumed, which means banning all music concerts, festivals, sporting events and closing all the bars and restaurants.

If you want to see a real drug problem, I would suggest that you go downtown at 2 am on any weekend and watch the bars empty out. You will see crowds of heavily drugged people completely out of control, staggering around screaming obscenities and threatening to kill each other. This kind of behavior would never be tolerated at a rave.

Raves, in fact, have one of the best safety records of any public event. Statistically it is far more dangerous to go to a soccer match. In my hometown of Brighton, England, on any given Saturday there are armies of people fighting in the streets. These brawls both inside and outside the games often result in injuries and even death. At one of these so-called sporting events, 14 people died and yet I have never heard anyone calling for a ban on soccer.

I appreciate and share the concerns that the police department has about raves. No one wants to see young people at risk, and as the father of two teenage boys who have both attended rave parties, I have a vested interest in helping to make these events as safe as possible.

The bottom line is young people have an enormous amount of energy to burn and desperately want to be a part of this important global musical revolution. By banning these events we will force people into unsafe venues with inadequate services and security.

I would ask that this council work together with reputable promoters, and hopefully, together, we can strive to achieve a measure of Peace, Love, Unity and Respect and be a good example to our children.

Thank you for your time.

Jimi Fritz
Author of "Rave Culture; an insider's overview."
www.raveculture.cjb.net

2.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(In response to Techno/Rave/Spin...Is It Music? from Stuart Munro, Hornby Island)

Concerning Stuart Munro's letter taking issue with electronic dance music. The fact that he refers to this new musical genre as Techno/Rave /Spin betrays the fact that he is ill-informed on the subject. While the term Techno describes one of the many new musical forms emerging today, Rave/Spin describes nothing. Perhaps Mr. Munro is talking about House music, or Trance, or Drum and Bass, or even Jungle; all new, and quite distinct musical forms.

The many new innovations in electronic dance music represents the first real original music since the sixties. It is an exciting time for those of us who are not too jaded to open our ears and minds to something new.

Peace, James Fry

3.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR, Monday Magaazine.

(Re: Raving Bliss and Ross Crockford's editorial on Rave)

Congratulations to Monday and Ross Crockford for having the courage and vision to present a realistic view of the rave movement. It is refreshing to read something at last that goes beyond the paranoid, sensationalist and myopic reporting we have come to expect from the popular press on this subject.

Rave on...

James Fry

4.

Letter to the Editor.....

In response to your report on City Hall deciding that non-alcoholic venues should close by two am, I would like to offer some public input that was obviously absent from the decision making process.

As a father of two teenagers, I am painfully aware that there are no suitable venues in the City of Victoria where teens can freely gather and socialize and most parents are unwilling to have crowds of teenagers hang around their houses in the evening. This means that teens are forced to take to the streets and parks to meet and gather. The new club that inspired this draconian piece of law making, Number Nine on Yates Street, is willing to sacrifice a lucrative liquor license in order to provide a safe and healthy environment for teenagers. Turning them out on the streets at two am will force them back on the streets at the worst possible time, creating even bigger problems. When will we ever learn that the way to win the respect of teens is to offer them our trust and support; and a safe place to hang out. These types of punitive measures will only create more resentment and in the end lead to more problems.

James Fry

5.

Speech to Victoria Mayor and City Council

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I'm here today to speak to the validity of Rave Culture.

I have just spent the last two years writing, publishing and distributing a book about rave culture. During the process of researching this project, I conducted hundreds of interviews with ravers, promoters and Djs from more than thirty countries and discovered the global rave phenomenon to be a potent and positive youth movement.

Rave preaches acceptance, tolerance and understanding, and places a strong emphasis on close friendships, family and community. Values that we would do well to foster in a society rife with division, intolerance, and fractured families.

In the last ten years rave has grown from an underground subculture to an international cultural movement with a unified vision and a global sense of community.

The underlying philosophy of rave can be summed up in the acronym PLUR which can be found on flyers advertising events throughout the world. The letters stand for Peace, Love, Unity and Respect and like their sixties counterparts, I believe that we will look back on the rave movement as a significant and influential cultural force.

Rave is not only responsible for producing the first new music in twenty years but also represents a new sensibility in the areas of fashion, politics, philosophy, business, and sexuality.

Contrary to the popular press, ravers are not just a bunch of drugged-out teenagers. They are a new generation who are well informed, politically aware, socially motivated and foster an optimistic vision of the future.

I was disappointed to hear recently that rave parties had been effectively banned in the City of Victoria. I think that it's very important to be clear about exactly what is being banned or restricted here. Are we banning electronic dance music? or all night dancing? or glow beads? And if we are banning raves on the speculative suspicion that some people *may* take illegal drugs, we are in direct violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which grants us the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

And if suspected drug use is the real issue here, then we must be prepared to apply the same criterion to other public events where illegal drugs are consumed, which means banning all music concerts, festivals, sporting events and closing all the bars and restaurants.

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Raves, in fact, have one of the best safety records of any public event. Statistically it is far more dangerous to go to a soccer match. In my hometown of Brighton, England, on any given Saturday there are armies of people fighting in the streets. These brawls both inside and outside the games often result in injuries and even death. At one of these so-called sporting events, 14 people died and yet I have never heard anyone calling for a ban on soccer.

I appreciate and share the concerns that the police department has about raves. No one wants to see young people at risk, and as the father of two teenage boys who have both attended rave parties, I have a vested interest in helping to make these events as safe as possible.

Responsible and experienced promoters like Nigel Tasko of Noble House Productions are to be commended for the lengths they go to provide a safe and enjoyable environment. There is no other public event in the City of Victoria that conducts full body searches on entry. It would be interesting to hear the public reaction if the same stringent security checks were in place at other events at the Memorial Arena or other public venues such as the Royal Theatre.

The bottom line is young people have an enormous amount of energy to burn and desperately want to be a part of this important global musical revolution. By banning these events we will force people into unsafe venues with inadequate services and security.

I would ask that this council work together with reputable local promoters and hopefully, together, we can strive to achieve a measure of Peace, Love, Unity and Respect and be a good example to our children.

Thank you for your time.

6.

Re: Letters to the Editor:

Your recent report (Few people but drugs in big supply/Nov. 30/98) about the rave held at memorial arena on the 28th of November seemed to be so obsessed with drug use that it failed to mention the fact that the majority of people, myself included, were there to hear some of the most exciting new music on the planet today.

If a report on a Rolling Stones or a Bruce Springstein concert talked only about the drugs consumed by the audience and failed to even mention the music or the musicians, people would be justifiably outraged.

Raves are not about drugs, they are about celebrating the first truly new music since the sixties and a good many citizens of Victoria - at least 2,500 - want to be a part of this musical revolution.

James Fry

7.

Letter to the editor:

RE: IRRESPONSIBLE REPORTING

(Teenagers stalked by drug use, Judith Lavoie, April 24th)

In your recent front page story on the rave scene in Victoria it was painfully obvious that Ms. Lavoie had little or no knowledge of her subject and had certainly never attended a rave. Had she taken the time to research her story properly, she would have discovered that the rave scene in Victoria has a lot more to offer young people than Meth Amphetamines. She might have mentioned that ravers foster and promote a positive vision of the world that emphasizes peace, love, unity and respect, (This is often printed on the tickets) or that ravers advocate a healthy lifestyle, reject alcohol and, like their sixties counterparts, are working to make a better world for all of us. Ms. Lavoie's sensationalist take on this growing worldwide cultural movement is no more useful than record burning rednecks in the deep south or the homicidal pot smokers of Reefer Madness. If you want to see a real drug problem, try hanging out in downtown Victoria on a Saturday night and watch the bars close.

James Fry (41)

