

## THEMAIL

enjoying our after-retirement "second careers" as English teachers in China. We know of many retirees who are taking this same opportunity—you get paid to travel, explore, learn about other cultures and meet new friends. It is hard to say how many retired Canadians are doing this, but the number is growing. It's not just kids who leave home any more.

Betts and Laurie Mackenzie, Yangshuo, China

### Onward Christian soldiers

In your May 17 UpFront news digest, you reported that Christian militiamen killed up to 1,000 Muslims in the Nigerian town of Yelwa. I think that "Christian militiamen" or "Christian rebels" when it refers to people who kill innocent civilians, are modern-day oxymorons. These religious battles are not founded in Christianity but, rather, in simple hatred. Jesus Christ would not be pleased. I prefer the term "militiamen who claim to be Christian."

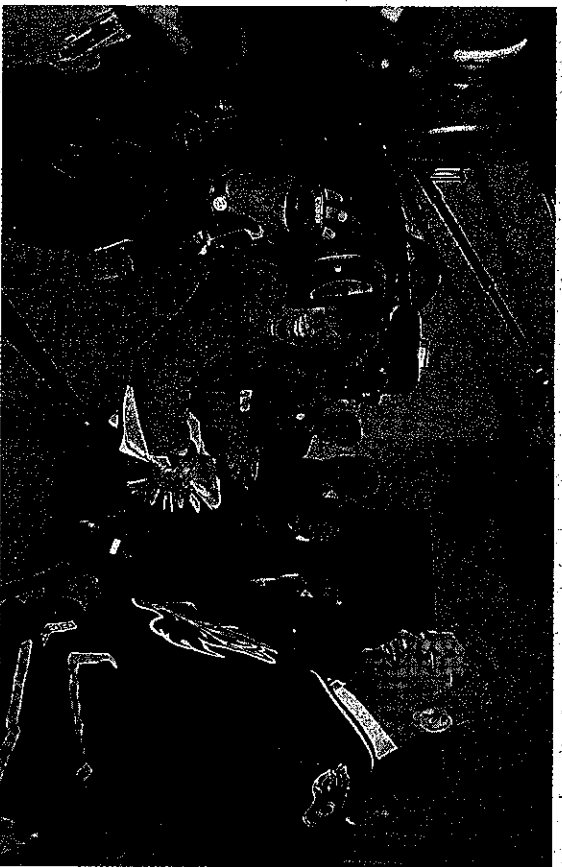
Dr. Pat Duronio, Windsor, Ont.

### Finding Harper

I see that Stephen Harper's image is being polished to present a warm, fuzzy and reasonable person ("Work in progress," Politics, May 24). We saw a similar PR campaign in B.C. prior to the last election. Gordon Campbell was presented as a decent family man, very much a centrist Liberal. However, after being elected he turned out to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. The Mike Harris government in Ontario when first elected also seemed to be reasonable, only to turn on the population. People don't do a U-turn. Harper can't dissociate himself from his ideological pronouncements. It would be a shame if he made it into power, for, like the Campbell regime in B.C., he would dismantle much of the Canadian fabric.

Richard Kadulski, Vancouver

The media have been giving Stephen Harper an unbelievably easy ride since his elevation as leader of the new Conservative party. Sure the Liberals have been screwing up, but is this any reason to let Harper off the hook for his support for George W. Bush's war in Iraq? Or his time spent as head of the ultra-right-wing National Citizens Coalition? Or his caustic comments on everything from health care to immigrants to



Readers ask whether attempts to make over Harper mean he's a wolf in sheep's clothing

Atlantic Canada? Make no mistake, Harper is no moderate; he's neo-con all the way. Bob Calhoun, Hope, B.C.

### Appreciating youth

I want to thank *Maclean's* for its special report "The best and the brightest" (May 24). During this federal election, it's good to be reminded that the future of our country is not solely in the hands of political leaders, but also in the hands of the young men and women you featured. May I suggest that *Maclean's* make an effort to get this special report into the hands of every Grade 8 and 9 student in Canada. In the present atmosphere, they could use some hope. George Brown, Ottawa

At first I was excited to see the cover line "Canada's brightest academic stars," but after reading the article I was quite disappointed. While I don't doubt that the people you chose are worthy, almost all of them are in the sciences or law. Do you assume that these are the only scholars who make a difference? The world does not simply need new medical discoveries or policy changes. Philosophy, theology, history and literature are relevant and valuable not because they

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are relevant and valuable not because they

provide easy answers or new "solutions," but because they train people to see the world in different ways. Walk through the halls of Canada's universities and you will meet bright minds, trained in the arts, who challenge our assumptions and thus help shape our characters. I recently graduated with a bachelor of arts and will likely continue my studies in theology. My professors have taught me to see the world through different eyes, and the importance of this should not be overlooked. Julia Thiessen, Altona, Man.

As I was flipping through "The best and brightest," I was delighted to read about all the wonderful young people this country holds. As a 17-year-old, I was particularly inspired by Michelle Dagnino. Of all the people profiled, she is the one that I as a relatively young person can most relate to—her greatest skill is her passion for social change. I am totally inspired and would like to model myself after such outstanding young people as Ms. Dagnino. Karen Lau, Saskatoon

### Royal blunder

Shame on you for not knowing the age of your Queen ("Over the hill? What hill?" Society, May 24). Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second was born on April 21, 1926, thus making her 78 years of age, not 77, as reported in the May 24 issue of your magazine. Barbara Harwood, North Saanich, B.C.