Guest Column/Paul Boutin

Some rights which are close to home

It seems that every issue of this paper carries at least two columns of letters addressing "rights." Various writers insist that we either have a right to something or are entitled to something: the right to have school papers or photographs come back, the right to have people clean up the mess around our cars, the right to have the police return our lost property, and so on.

We do not yet have the right to write all original compositions and have them published for free. Nor do we yet have the right to not get caught in the snow, or to use a fire hydrant without paying for it. However, these are important educational issues. If we are unable to publish our original work, we cannot learn to be original. Or if we are unable to use a fire hydrant, we cannot learn to make use of the resources available to us.

In this sense, "rights" is a metaphor for the ability to do something. It is a label for the freedom to do something.

This metaphor is important in its own right. It is not just a matter of whether we have the right to do something. It is a question of whether we can do something. And if we cannot do something, then we do not have the right to do it.

For example, if we cannot eat ice cream, then we do not have the right to eat ice cream. But if we can eat ice cream, then we do have the right to eat ice cream.

In this sense, "rights" is not just a question of whether we have the right to do something. It is a question of whether we can do something.

In conclusion, then, "rights" is a metaphor for the ability to do something. It is a label for the freedom to do something. And if we cannot do something, then we do not have the right to do it. If we can do something, then we do have the right to do it.

The concept of "rights" is important in its own right. It is not just a matter of whether we have the right to do something. It is a question of whether we can do something. And if we cannot do something, then we do not have the right to do it. If we can do something, then we do have the right to do it.

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