A recent letter to the editor of The Daily Free Press deserves comment and thoughtful discussion in as wide an arena as possible.

The letter writer, Roy Plater, is a strong champion of the arts in our community and has been active over the years in the arts council, in the Nanaimo Theatre Group, and as a member of the performing arts committee working on plans for a new performing space for our town.

Plater has represented the arts well in these and other arts groups as well as being on the cultural committee of the parks and recreation commission. Roy, in his letter, suggests that civic politicians "should make known their positions regarding the place of the arts in the life of the community." He then goes on to formulate several questions for political hopefuls to answer.

I hope our candidates have seen the letter (Nov. 4, 1982) and will take the time to respond to the questions posed by Plater as vice-president of the Nanaimo Arts Council.

Now, after saying all of that and urging comment and thought about the questions because they are important questions, and we do need to know what our elected officials believe about the arts, let me quibble with the first question.

Roy writes, "1. Do you feel that the arts deserve as conspicuous a place in the life of the community?"

Firstly, it has always seemed to me that the arts people make too much of the assumed competition with the sports people; I have even known some people who are interested in both!

Secondly, it's not clear what Roy means by "conspicuous." Does he mean "easy to see"? Or does he mean "attracting attention by being outstanding"?

Now, I certainly agree that arts and sports should be easy to see in the community. That is, they should be accessible to anyone, available to both participant and spectator, and reported on with intelligence and balance. In the best of all possible worlds they would be seen not as competitors for the lottery money but as an integral part of human activity not to be left to the whims of political funding, but as necessary for health and wholeness as good food and clean air.

Most arts people I have talked with are constantly worried that athletics is getting too much of the pie, thus perpetuating the adversarial myth. I can see no reason why the two enterprises are thought of as distinct and competing. Perhaps if we started to think and speak of them as partners instead of antagonists both would flourish.

Which do you think more important in calculating the area of a rectangle: length or width?

A certain convention numbered 100 politicians. Each politician was either crooked or honest. We are given the following two facts:

- at least one of the politicians was honest.
- given any two of the politicians, at least one of the two was crooked.

Question: how many of the politicians were honest and how many of them were crooked?

This example is one of the many delightful and paradoxical teasers offered in Raymond Smullyan's latest book of logical puzzles, The Lady or the Tiger?, which, as you can guess, gets its title from Frank Stockton's classic story of the prisoner forced to choose which of two doors he will open. Behind one waits a beautiful woman. The other? A tiger!

Smullyan has written several books, including What's the Name of This Book which is available at the Malaspina College library. I've used puzzles from it in both informal and formal logic classes, logic or mathematics. Smullyan's brilliance is that he can make the most complex problem simple and accessible.

He is able, for example, to telescope the reader into comprehending complex philosophical problems by presenting simple and understandable problems. Before you know what happened you are taken from truth functions to propositional logic to set theory and formal systems.

Without realizing it you are ready to understand Godel's Incompleteness theorem. And then you are at the centre of contemporary logic and mathematics.

Those of you interested in logical puzzles should plan to take informal logic at the college this year. You will find it challenging and fun.

Answer? We are given the information that at least one person is honest. Let us pick out any one honest person whose name, say, is Frank. Now pick any of the remaining 99; call him Richard. By the second given condition, at least one of the two men is crooked. Since Frank is not crooked, it must be Richard.

Since Richard represents any of the remaining 99 men, then each of those 99 men must be crooked. So the answer is that one is honest and 99 are crooked! Just like real life.