



# mugwump journal

By JOEY KILFOIL

Hello gang, and welcome to emergency Mugwump. You see, our managing editor has come down with your basic cold or something and since she was supposed to write this week and obviously can't I'm filling in at the last minute. Anyway, we all wish Susan a speedy recovery, and to amuse her in her sick bed I shall get on with the dribble . . .

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Who would ever have believed it? Just a short while after 1,000 students get off their butts to march on the Legislature, the percentage of people that turnout for SRC elections almost doubles over the previous year. And to top it off, all the executive positions were contested!

So where the hell is all the Brunswickan staffers? Are you people out there aware that this paper is laid out every week by a group of about five people? Granted it's nice to see a staffer expand his talents. In fact, some of our best writers have become good photographers and vice-versa. But in a campus of 5,000 students, it's ridiculous that a handful of them should be involved in a club that is responsible for 10 per cent of the Student Union's income and 18 per cent of its expenditures.

I recall a few weeks back when we ran into a slight delivery problem and the paper was not at the usual locations as early in the morning as it should have been. You would't believe the number of phone calls we got at this office. "Where's the Bruns?" "Why isn't the paper here?" and so forth. While it was nice to know that we were missed, I question the thinking of students who consider the paper that important but won't get off their ass to help it when it is in serious trouble.

And believe me folks, this paper is in serious trouble. The people that do work here regularly (don't let the staff list fool you) have mid-terms like all of us. So what happens when only one person shows up for most of layout night? Or two, like this week?

You guys know where to find us. If you don't know anything about the business, we can teach you.

So if you think the blank space remaining below this column looks bad, you know what you can do about it. I don't really have the time to do any more on this right now.

# soundoff

## Necessity of MENSA questioned

Sir:

I see I touched a sensitive nerve, to judge by Ms. Cormier's over-reaction (9 October) to my letter (2 October) commenting on her article (25 September), in which she wondered why students and faculty did not attempt to join Mensa. She failed to realize that I was only poking gentle fun at her dubious organization.

I do not wish to get drawn into a silly argument. People are obviously free to join Mensa, and I did not say I considered all Mensans arrogant and inadequate. The aim of my letter was to point out that her questioning the intellectual capacity of academics, because none of us are members of Mensa, displayed the "arrogance of inadequacy." In fact, a few years ago Mensa did have a professor on campus here for a member; unfortunately she was asked to resign for incompetence.

Eschewing a petty quarrel, then, let us look at the serious side of the question. The central issue here is not bigotry: we are all, hopefully, broad-minded, willing to consider all points of view. The essential questions are: What is intelligence? Can it be measured?

The controversy, begun in 1905 with Binet's invention of the I.Q. test, has warmed up recently with studies by people like Arthur Jensen, Leon Kamin, and most recently, Stephen Jay Gould (The Mismeasurable of Man), New York: Norton, 1981). As they have noted, the present (especially North American) pre-occupation with measuring every school kid's intelligence has done a lot of harm to some truly intelligent people. The problem lies in the unarguable fact that the test has yet to be devised that can accurately measure "intelligence". A "high I.Q. score" only means that the people who made up the test agree that you answered the questions the way they think you should have answered them. In R.C. Lewontin's words, "It is rather like claiming, as a proof of the existence of God, that He is mentioned in all the books of the Bible."

Common sense - or human sense - may be more representative of real intelligence than particular aptitudes for particular problems. Many brilliant people are hopeless spellers, for example. I like the story of the two lobster fishermen watching a man trying unsuccessfully to learn to row a boat. One said to the other, "You see that man? They say he's a famous professor and knows an awful lot." To which the other responded: "Well, he may know a lot, but he don't understand nothin'."

Then again, many would argue that creativity is the greatest "intelligence" of all in our search for Truth, indeed the very basis and the hope of our civilization; yet creativity certainly cannot be quantified for the very fact that it is unique, and uniqueness by definition has no standard.

It is not our aptitude for winning games like chess, or solving James Fixx's puzzles, therefore, that is relevant to our importance as human beings within our society and civilization. Rather, it is the manner in which we apply our God-given mental gifts, and our achievements therefrom, that determine our "intelligence". The most brilliant mind I have ever known belonged to an undergraduate classmate of mine at Yale. We were in awe of his incredible, even superhuman, mental and intellectual powers. He graduated with the highest

GPA ever achieved before or since, went on to graduate an easy first in his Harvard Law School class, and became the youngest partner in the history of one of New York's prestigious law firms. I ran into him again not long ago, and he confided to me that, despite his reputation as New York's most successful lawyer in his field, and despite his \$300,000-a-year-income, he felt disappointed with himself and unfulfilled: he had used his mind only to serve the mundane interests of big corporate clients; he had not yet created anything that would serve mankind.

Moral: intelligence is as intelligence does. If you like chess, join a chess club and find someone who plays intelligently; if you like sports, join a team and meet people who play intelligently; if you like history, read and discuss and write history intelligently with like-minded people. Common interests and pursuits - not similar aptitudes - bring intelligent people together and achieve something worthwhile. Universities are founded on that principle, and have thus ever gathered together the best minds and the greatest real intelligence. It is not that Mensa is unwelcome here. Just unnecessary.

Yours sincerely,

## Conversationalists cursed

Dear Editor:

Having attended the first two in the thoroughly enjoyable series of Beethoven concerts offered on Wednesday afternoons, I feel obliged to make the following comment.

My remarks are addressed to those who seemingly are unable to sit and listen to music for half-an-hour without having to converse with their neighbours. When the urge to talk strikes, please be aware

of two things. First, you might be missing a very beautiful moment. Second, even a whispered comment is very audible and can be quite distracting and disturbing for fellow audience members and, I would imagine, the performers.

If you truly are bored and you don't have the politeness to sit quietly, perhaps the best thing to do is to leave.

Kathy McHugh