

OPINION...

THE ROLE OF A STUDENT PAPER

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It seems self evident that a student paper of today, published on a weekly basis like the Brunswickan, need not dispense news and entertainment as a daily newspaper would do, or even like a weekly magazine. Our society has an abundance of these, along with radio and television broadcasts to satisfy the needs of most students.

The main reason for the existence of a university student paper must be: (i) to inform students of and about different events and activities on the campus, (ii) provide a means of communication among the students, and (iii) to reflect on the problems of life - political, social, economic, etc., from a perspective which is more intellectual and less emotional, as against what is true in the society at large.

The complaint on the part of the editorial staff of the Brunswickan that not enough students are willing to contribute their time and talent towards the paper, is not new. It is almost perennial. A few years ago, an editor of the Brunswickan used some foul language in referring to this problem, to which I objected, and expressed my sympathy with the vast majority of students who seem unable to devote time to the production of a newspaper. I believe that most students who are seriously interested in pursuing their studies, not directly related to language and journalism, can ill afford the time required in putting together a newspaper. I suggested that the Brunswickan seek some help from the English Department and reduce the number of its pages to about 8.

In the last week's Opinion column, Luis Cordoso (a student?, a faculty member?) refers to "distressing student apathy" and goes on to advise that "The Student Union should play a more significant role in rallying students to worthy causes; it can make students aware that they are a political force that cannot be ignored". I believe that his advice is misguided and harmful to the students. The primary purpose of the students being at a university is to acquire knowledge and broaden their intellectual horizons; it should be the least of their concerns to establish themselves as a "political force". Such ambitions can wait until they have achieved their educational goals.

The columnist also parenthetically accuses me of paranoia and anti-semitism, without giving any reasons or examples, and incites students to do the same. He is unable to recognize his own paranoia in seeing anti-semitism and Nazis all around him, for example in people who oppose forced bilingualism, COR, or those who question some historical figures and are afraid that their religious and cultural heritage is being destroyed, like Malcom Ross. The world has radically changed and anti-semitism seems to be a phoney problem.

I agree with the Brunswickan editorial of December 1, that "the ideal editors of this paper should be at least literate. Those students who write for the paper can be expected to demonstrate at least rudimentary competence in the English language.Progress will be made, when those who know better come forward to assist those who are seeking to develop". However, I do not agree with the comment that "We will not be able to achieve these ends without a period given to the tedious process of learning through practice".

It is understood that the students who would take the leadership roles in the Brunswickan staff, would have had some experience in the past, either at UNB or elsewhere as apprentices, and a complete novice will not be expected to put together a newspaper. Here are some suggestions.

1) Hire or enlist two proof readers-possibly in consultation with someone in the Department of English, who might be able to recommend suitable students. It should take no more than four hours of time each week, and need not be too expensive.

2) Each editor should be individually responsible for the quality of the material published under his/her guidance. It should be his or her responsibility to make sure that there are few factual errors, like the statement that a fetus up to 12 weeks is no more than a blob of red blood. The Chief editor should have the authority to delete or stop publication of material which he/she considers in bad taste.

3) I recall that the title "Blood & Thunder" was introduced by the hippie generation of students, and can have the unfortunate implication that whatever is published under this heading need not be taken too seriously. UNB does have some very competent students and the Brunswickan has published some very well reasoned letters from them, and it would be desirable to change the title to something like "Students' Forum" or "Readers' Reaction."

4) Indicate a student writer's major field of study and their year at the University, because while a first year student may be excused for certain errors of language, etiquette or maturity of thought, a graduate student may not be. This is not to say that some first year students might not be as competent and mature as a student at a higher level.

5) Since the faculty at UNB do not have a medium of communication of their own, the Brunswickan could reserve a corner for "Faculty News and Views", with some deference for the fact that they are at a different stage in life and may have a different perspective from that of most students, and need not be treated exactly like students.

To end at a pleasant note, there was a marked improvement in the editorial content of the Brunswickan during this term.



By Melanie R. Hawkes

Well, this is it. This is the last *Mugwump* for first term AND the final *Mugwump* for the 1980's!! Can I handle this responsibility??

Why do profs always keep giving students assignments right up until the last day of classes? Couldn't they go a little easier the final week? Just maybe we poor students could find a chance to do some extra study and actually do well in some of our courses. Or is the objective to fail us?

Why not start school earlier in the summer and finish exams a week earlier? Every other university finishes days before us, but not UNB! We have to study practically till Christmas Eve. So please everyone, NO Christmas Spirit, NO Singing Carols and definitely NO Spreading Christmas Cheer until we're done our exams. And *Bahunbug*.

Do you really think children believe Santa Clause exists? I mean, every mall has a Santa, each one looks and sounds different and he's only here a month early. Seems a bit obvious, don't ya think.

What about that jerk in Montreal who massacred all those innocent people! How can anyone be so miserable to have to cause so much grief, pain and suffering for so many other families? What a selfish person. Obviously the guy must have had some kind of deep hatred towards women. The problem sparking his psycho behaviour was probably as simple as his girlfriend dumping him.

Have you ever noticed how very complicated it is to get any help or co-operation from clerks or receptionists? For example, I ask the clerk at the airport desk "Do you have a ticket for Mary Smith? I'm supposed to pick it up here."

"No. I have no record of you, are you sure you're supposed to pick it up here?"

"Yes I was told to pick it up here, not tomorrow but today only."

Well after you've told the story, she can't figure out what the problem is so she goes and gets another person to come and help. You have to re-tell them the whole story. They punch a few buttons on the computer and shuffle a few papers. They still don't know. So, another clerk comes along who you're so privileged to tell the story to them also. I think everybody just likes to know what's going on, but no one really wants to do anything about it. Well finally, the whole thing sorts itself out and you find you were right all along if only they looked a little bit.

Well, I know we've just about talked this next subject to death, but here I go.

What about all these snow storms lately? There's nothing worse than having every other institution closed down due to the snow, except UNB. Then one kills themselves to get to school and can't find a place to put the car. None of the parking lots are ploughed out. Then one has to wade through 2 feet of snow to get to classes, only to find that all of them are cancelled. You realize of course, that if you didn't show up, the class would have been held as scheduled.

Well, I'm not going to stand for this crummy weather anymore. I'm out of here in 12 days. My boyfriend, Trevor and I are going uwoj uwoj to catch some rays for 3 weeks while the rest of you freeze up here. Can't say I feel too bad about it.

Hope you have a Merry Christmas and Santa Claus finds you. Best wishes for exams.

P.S. I'll send you a postcard!

P.S.S. 'Hi Dad!!'

