

Editorial / Mugwump

EDITORIAL

Pick your issue, folks

The last week, and the entire Blood and Thunder section, has been taken up with discussion and debate about the Opinion column published in last week's *Brunswickan*.

Local, provincial and national media have all scrutinized the column, *The Brunswickan*, and the editorial decision to publish Assistant Professor Yaqzan's controversial views on date rape.

The piece was published to expose the fact that date rape is not considered by everyone to be as serious a crime as it is. The result is this incredible irony: it is a national news story that someone can explain date rape as anything less than a vicious atrocity. Wake up world! Every morning of life there are people who justify forcing another person into an unwanted sexual encounter.

There are attitudes in the world which can justify using another person for their own sexual gratifications. How else could it be that almost thirty per cent of the students surveyed at this university last year have experienced unwanted sexual attention?

This is reality. No one deserves to be subjected to any act which compromises them physically, emotionally or psychologically, no matter whether they have been sexually active, or have never had any intimate contact. Men and women must both be responsible for their own sexuality, and no excuse of provocation or temptation can be a defence for the perpetrator of any kind of sexual assault.

The university has actually come out with a decisive statement about the whole issue, classroom discussions have focused on the article and the issues of date rape and you can't walk through this campus without hearing somebody talking about rape and sexuality. There has never been any kind of date rape awareness campaign during my

years at this university that has been able to generate this level of discussion.

The coverage of the whole issue within the media has been interesting. A columnist in one paper said that while he wouldn't go so far as to call printing the article irresponsible, he questioned *The Brunswickan's* judgement because of the extremity of Yaqzan's views on other subjects. Fair criticism, but a little out of place considering that the story in question was run immediately below a reprinting of the entire text of the Opinion column, and that the newspaper it appeared in has been known to publish letters expressing Yaqzan's views on other subjects.

It is a shame that much of the controversy has surrounded on peripheral issues such as Yaqzan's refusal to speak to the press for less than \$5,000, and dramatic footage of Yaqzan running through the physics building followed by camera crews.

While anyone making as bold a statement about so controversial a subject as Yaqzan did should be willing to defend their views to the public, the issue here is date rape.

The radio, television and newspaper coverage about the Opinion have quoted statistics about sexual assault and unwanted sexual experiences as though they were interesting and barely related trivia. On our campus, the UNB Unwanted Sexual Experiences Survey reports that of those who had been raped or sexually assaulted, only 7.2 per cent were victimized by a stranger.

It's disturbing that the frequency of such occurrences alone cannot make date rape as publicized an issue as Yaqzan's Opinion column has become.

MUGWUMP

NEWS AND VIEWS ABOUT BEING THE NEWS and other stories...

A very disturbing story has come to light in the last week. It is not strictly a university story, but it will directly affect the university environment, and could have damaging effects upon a large segment of the student population. It also has larger social consequences which cannot be ignored. In fact, society as we know it is under intense pressure; this news story threatens the social fabric and the social contract that has maintained Western civilization through the last few decades. This story comes to us from Ontario. In a few short words: someone is attempting to unionize McDonald's.

Imagine a world of unionized McDonalds, where the poor, the dispossessed, huddled masses who have toiled for years in obscurity and poverty, working in one of the most often lampooned and denigrated industries in the world, could become part of what might turn into one of the world's most powerful labour movements. The union in question has already called the certification attempt a beachhead, with an eye to going after all 13,000 McDonald's operations worldwide. Needless to say, there are a lot of lawyers descending on the hearings. Lucky for the union, this case is taking place in Ontario. With any luck for the union, Bob Rae will decide he can't afford to piss off any *more* Ontarians, and the ride will be smooth.

Here at the Brunswickan we've been operating under siege for the past week. Some of the staff members who have been contemplating journalism are taking long hard looks at their career choices—now that we know the "deer caught in headlights" effect of video lights, some of us wonder whether we want to do unto others as we have been done by. When three TV crews are lined up to shoot you laying out dates and pages—which is just mindless tedium and repetition—and you then see that shot on the national news, needless to say you begin to get a little paranoid. When someone tells you that the story surrounding your actions is on CNN, you get a lot paranoid

Being a long time political hack, I've noticed a few interesting trends here in student politics. Specifically, I've noticed that the Student Union Council seems awfully defensive about the performance

of Campus Entertainment and the VP-Fun. When my substitute Steve commented on the repeated booking of certain bands and made comparisons to another campus in our region, the SU came down on us like a ton of bricks. What the VP-Fun and the supporters of Campus Entertainment should not forget is that we tell every other member of the executive how to do their jobs on a week to week basis—why should we start making an exception for them? From comments made before, during and after the concert Monday, one would think they took it personally, or that it had been implied that SOTW was not a good act or not worth booking. This is untrue. What was implied was that, while a good act [who gave an awesome show to an absolutely crazed and delirious crowd Monday night (F.A. guys!)], it would be worthwhile to try to vary the schedule. I'm not saying never bring back SOTW; anyone who knows me is aware that I would *never* let anyone write that in my name, in my column or in anything I have any influence over. What I've said (and what I think Steve meant)—and still believe—is that we need variety.

Blue Rodeo, SOTW, The Hip, the Grapes of Wrath, the Shuffle Demons, the Northern Pikes, the Skydiggers... each of these bands has made repeated trips to UNB in the three and a bit years since I arrived here. Grapes of Wrath played twice in one term. The Hip and the Northern Pikes played twice in one year. The Hip played three times in two years. Blue Rodeo and the Skydiggers have played again and again and again and again and... **stop!** I can't take it anymore! Book good bands. But when given the option, book a *new* good band.

-J.R.

(Back from 3 academic hell weeks, Mugwump will be much more organized and structured than it was in the last few weeks. Promise.)



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Cheryl McLean (the sole newsie this week...she's lonely), Marieka Arnold, Kate Rogers, Jethelo E. Cablete, Randall N. Haslett, Stephen Mason, Michael Edwards, Allan Carter, Maria Paisley, Bones, Mark Savoie, Mark Kenney, A. Barchild, Jason Richard, Jason Meldrum, TDO, Liz Lautard, John Valk, SS, Aime the Postal Service Goddess (just dropped in for a visit and we made her work)

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