

# Editorial

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**A** dozen women stand nervously around the outside of the classroom. In the centre of the circle they have formed, their instructor demonstrates an effective method for disabling the enemy—using a swift strike to the face to break the attacker's nose.

The women, although aghast at this extreme, are here because they realize they must learn techniques such as this to survive. The violence and depravity around them has necessitated that they learn to fight, strike out, slash, punch and gouge to earn the privilege of choosing what will happen to their bodies and their lives.

They are not among the thousands of women facing rape and disfigurement by warring soldiers. They do not live in war-torn Eastern Europe. They live here. In New Brunswick. In Fredericton.

They attend classes, work as shop clerks, in government offices, or kindergartens right here in our capital city. They fear possible abuse from their partners, co-workers, class-mates, and strangers alike.

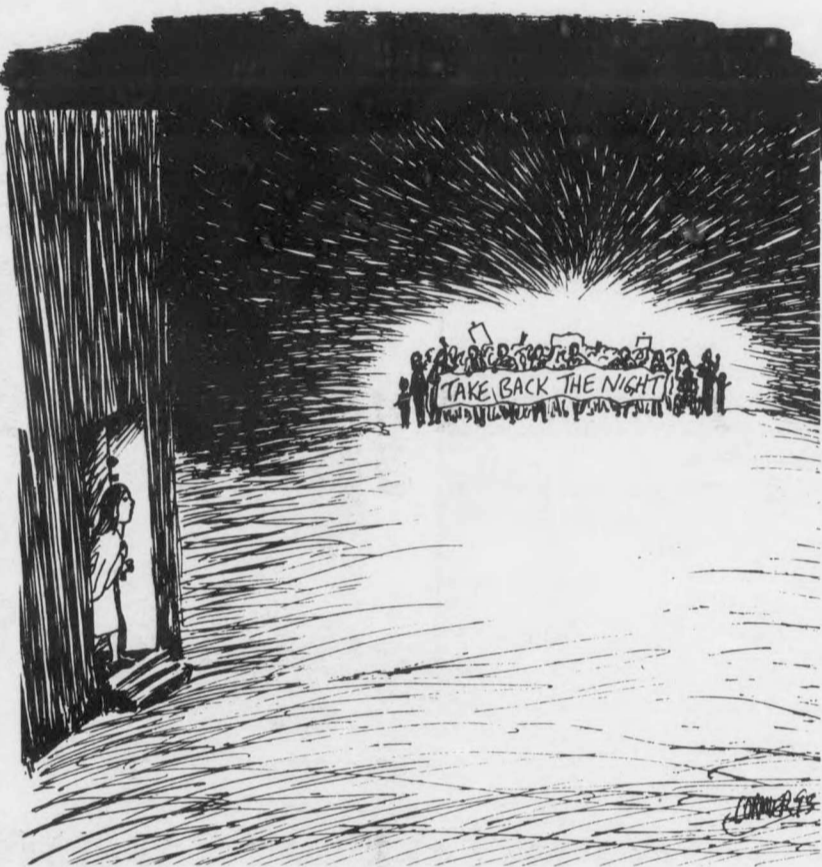
They cannot walk alone at night in their own neighborhoods.

Female students at UNB and STU can learn to defend themselves by taking one of the training workshops that will be offered on campus during the upcoming year. The FACTS course held on campus last week taught the basics of self-defense to over 60 women. However, as helpful as programs such as this are, they are undeniably a treatment of the symptom, and not the disease.

What else is being done?

Tonight, the Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre will hold a march to help women "Take Back the Night." They will gather tonight at City Hall at 8 p.m. as part of a nation-wide campaign protesting violence against women and children.

Right here on campus, the residents of Aitken House want to be "a part of the solution" for the problem of violence against women. They will hold



a forum to gather input from students—and particularly female students—about how to make residences safer for women. The meeting, which will be held in the library of the residence on Sunday at 7:30 p.m., is open to all interested students.

The forum is being held largely as a result of a reported sexual assault at the house. After being invited to a second interview with the police, the complainant apparently admitted to having falsely reported the assault. She now faces charges of mischief in connection with the case.

Despite the myth that women often make up charges of rape and sexual assault, statistics show that these cases are no more common than fabricated reports of other crimes. It would be easy to imagine that after repeated interrogations by the authorities, the prospect of having to give humiliating testimony in open court would prompt a woman who has already been violated and abused in a sexual assault to recant her testimony in order to avoid further degradation.

In addition to these obstacles, women often find that their attackers, if convicted, are given punishments which in no way reflect the physical and psychological damage sustained during a sexual assault. A volunteer who works with rape survivors once commented that people convicted of illegal hunting procedures often serve longer sentences than those found guilty of rape or molestation.

Perhaps it's time that the legal system tries to keep up with the Joneses (or in this case the Aitkens), and at least ask for input from the public in revising sexual assault laws to deliver

tougher sentences for perpetrators, and more sensitive treatment for victims.

It may never be possible to Take Back the Night, but we should at least be able to find safe haven in the law.

### Remember

We want your submissions for Spectrum, Opinion, and Blood and Thunder. Drop them off at Room 35 before 5 p.m. on Monday, for publication in next week's issue.

## MUGWUMP

Note: this column previously appeared as D for Democracy last year.

**W**hoever designed the UNB campus had a real eye for aesthetics, with wonderful brick buildings surrounded by a grassy hill and plentiful trees. What the designers of this campus didn't have an eye for was accessibility. A distressingly high percentage of buildings here at UNB are to varying degrees inaccessible to the disabled. If you are interested in the liberal arts, you can go to STU. If not, we are basically saying find another school, probably in another province. I find that attitude inexcusable.

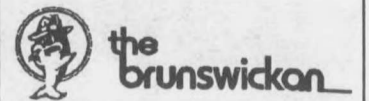
You don't realize how bad things are until you start looking at the layout of some of the buildings. Take a day, or even a morning, and walk from class to class, stopping at every staircase, step, ledge, what have you, and turning around and trying to find another way there. Good luck. With any luck, you won't have any tests that day, because at best you're going to be very very late, at worst, you won't get within a hundred feet of the classroom. Oh, and don't try to get to your prof's office to explain either, because those are as a rule even harder to get at. While many people pick classes by location (how close is it to the SUB?), imagine having to pick classes on the basis of whether or not you could get to them. One of the worst problems is that one of the things that students use most, the

Registrar's office, is totally inaccessible. Located on the second floor of the Old Arts Building, the Registrar's office is something I make about six trips a year to, more than the Business office or the offices of any of my profs, or even more than to some of my classrooms.

The voice of the students, the group that is meant to defend their interests and keep this sort of thing from happening, the UNB Student Union, may well be unaware of the problem. You see, I don't know how the disabled would communicate their difficulties to their councillors, because the Student Union is totally wheelchair inaccessible. There is at least one flight of stairs at each end of the corridor where the Student Union is located. The Social Issues Committee and Commissioner is supposed to be doing something about this. Last year, this committee was disturbing quiet on this issue... and all other issues, for that matter.

In the rapidly changing world of today's global marketplace, a university education is more of a requirement than an advantage. If we don't produce a large number of competent, intelligent, adaptable graduates, with a wide range of skills, knowledge and training, we are doomed to be what we are fast becoming: a third world nation with (for now) a relatively high standard of living. The University of New Brunswick is not blazing a trail for the rest of society, and for the corporate world. In fact, UNB is falling behind, if anything. Our universities cannot afford to begin accepting the status quo, they must always be moving forward.

To accept the status quo would be a negation of everything that education meant to be accomplishing: progress, the advancement of truth, knowledge, a better, cleaner, safer world... in effect, our future. If universities begin to live only in the here and now, they have lost track of their purpose and are simply being the champions of mediocrity. I don't know about you, but mediocrity wasn't why I chose UNB. Maybe I was wrong.



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You know, this is really pathetic. I mean, once upon a time, we had twenty or thirty staffers every week. Now? Ten. Ten. Where have all the keepers gone? Maybe they're all working for the Aquinian or for that Pillar-thing—not!

Words of Wisdom: Never trust a tall dwarf—he's lying about something.

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