

BLOOD & THUNDER

Letters to the Editor reflect the views of our readers and not necessarily those of the Brunswickan. Letters may be sent to Rm. 35, Student Union Building. Deadline: 5 p.m. Tuesdays. Maximum length: 300 words.

Politicized Difference

Nick Oliver believes Canadian's rights are being eroded (Brunswickan Oct. 11, 1991).

I agree with Nick but I fear Nick has been influenced and is trying to be as "politically correct" as Allan Carter. They are radical and wrong or they have been misled. Nick quotes a post war Jewish sentiment where the German population was divided and one by one they were eliminated. This is true and characteristic of Canadian society being divided. Minority groups, each with its distinct society (i.e. language and culture) are being pitted against one another. (Politicized).

If anyone in Canada is to be compared to the Nazi's dividing the people and repressing minority societies it is the french in Quebec whom have passed laws making it a crime to use English (a minority language in that province).

When Allan Carter and Nick Oliver realize the militancy of Canadian francophones and see the similarities of this group forcing its language and culture (ahead of other minorities) on the majority of Canadian citizens they must draw a comparison between Hitler's Nazi's, the Bloc Quebecois, The Acadian Society, the Parti Quebecois and Frank McKenna's "French Wing Party" within the New Brunswick Liberal government.

Canada needs to build on its similarities more than ever Canada needs one unifying language, one strong central government and one country made up of many peoples.

We need fewer people who politicize our differences.

Andrew Gorman

Time To stand up

I would first like to thank the writer or writers of "The Wimmin's Room" for taking the time to respond to my letter. Unfortunately I find the answer unacceptable. I was only made aware of the fact of the multiple authorship of the column after I had submitted my letter. Even with this knowledge, I still don't see why each author can't identify her/himself. I understand and appreciate the reason given for anonymity, but I feel that the argument "rings hollow in light of the evidence". As evidence I present the column 'Positively Pink' and the author's name attached to it. I contend that it is far more hazardous to reveal oneself as homosexual, in today's society, than someone in search of equal rights. Your historical examples of persecution are quite accurate, but at the same time they are history. I doubt seriously if you are in any real physical peril for expressing your ideas and if you are I will be willing to help make sure that they are heard. Also there are many tools at your disposal to protect yourself from the type of persecution that you fear. As a member of a university society you are in the safest position to voice extreme views. History has shown that all revolutions have started with students. I find your invocation of Anita Hill's

name a shallow attempt to play on current sympathies. Ms. Hill had the courage to stand up and voice her opinion, she did not hide behind anonymity. You say that you are waiting for the day to dawn when persecution for opinion will no longer be an issue and I say that that day will not simply come, it must be fought for and until you are ready to make a stand at the barricade your fight will be lost.

Greg Doran

Herstrionics Sexist

I cannot live with myself as a woman until I respond to October 18th's "The Wimmin's Room".

First of all, the next time I see "herstory" written in place of "history" I'm sure I will torch my copy of the Brunswickan. "Herstory" is in no way "history with the other half of the world's population included." (As Ms. --- explains in her article). "Herstory" is a intentionally and blatantly sexist word, made up to replace another word which might be considered sexist only through an accident of English spelling. Please spare us such childish herstrionics. Or should I say herstrionics.

Secondly, Ms. ---, I thank Heaven that women do not all "possess the strength and courage of Anita Hill". If I, or my younger sister, or (in 20 years) my daughter were ever to be sexually harassed, the absolute last thing I would do is let the sexist ass get away with it. I would never follow him from job to job, or maintain a friendship with him.

I do not see one thing Anita Hill has done to protect herself, her family or her sister women from this kind of occurrence. She is no role model for strong, equal women today.

Sexual harassment, rape, abuse, and violence (against anyone) is loathsome. Women are victims in our society more often than not. Terroristic behavior of haughty, so-called feminists, who believe they are superior, will do nothing to improve this.

My last point addresses anonymity, a subject which has been raised in the last two issues of the Brunswickan. I ask you, Ms. ---, where would woman-kind be today if Joan of Arc had decided to remain anonymous? Where would we be today if Gloria Steinem had decided to remain anonymous? Where would woman-kind be today, Ms. ---, if Rosa Parks had decided to remain anonymous?

Sexual discrimination is wrong. It is wrong whether it is sexist men discriminating against women, or sexist women discriminating against men.

Allison Webster

Facts are Facts

As one of the organizers (condom pushers) during AIDS Awareness Week. I was upset as I read John Valk's letter in the last issue of the Brunswickan. He complained that the posters in Visual AIDS were "one-sided", well, the exhibit was not meant to teach all the facts, that is why information tables (complete with T-

shirts, literature, and yes, condoms) were also set up all over campus all week. I think Visual AIDS served its purpose in showing how different societies deal with AIDS in poster advertisements, as well as sparking conversation and encouraging people to ask questions.

Another criticism was that we were "preaching the condom line, but ignoring the moral line." We were presenting facts on safer sex, we leave the preaching to John. Yes, it would be great if everyone would wait for that special someone, but facts are facts and this just is not happening. I am curious as to where he found the "statistics" stating that abstinence is on the rise amongst university students. I live in residence and just do not see that, if it were true then people would no longer ask me for condoms. By the way, they can be obtained from the AIDS Resource Office on the second floor of MacLaggan Hall. While you are there, take some of the literature too, it helps further explain safer sex.

There were mixed reactions to AIDS Awareness Week. Personally, I was impressed with the Visual AIDS, especially at Memorial Hall. The curator of the exhibit, Dr. Miller, stated that UNB and STU are only the third and fourth universities to display all of the posters. There was a presentation given by Karan and Dan, two PLWA's (Persons Living With AIDS). I commend them on their ability to reveal their stories and opening themselves to questioning. Dan's speech covered everything from legal aspects to his family's reaction. I was quite appalled to learn that people tell Dan that he deserved AIDS. No one deserves AIDS.

I would like to thank Grace Getty and her peer educators for a job very well done. These educators, the SWAT Team (Sex Without AIDS Today), are available for giving information sessions to small groups and can be reached at 453-4642. I would also urge people to call the Student Health Centre or Grace Getty to discuss AIDS testing. After all, you may be infected for years without showing any signs and in the meantime you may be infecting others. Please Remember-PLAY SAFE!

Patty Smith

No Stock in Condom Companies

Attn: Mr. Valk

I am writing regarding your article in the Oct. 18th, 1991, issue of the Brunswickan. To begin, I would like to state that I am very glad that your opinion is not that held by the "condom pushers". If this was the case, they (we) would stop distributing condoms (or as you put it "pushing") and talking about AIDS. As I am one of the "condom pushers", I will respond as one and not as an individual who believes you should wake-up and smell the 90's.

Your comment regarding "warnings" was completely incorrect. If you had ever taken the time to 1) attend a SWAT (Sex Without AIDS Today) session or 2) read a condom package, you would have heard and

seen it stated that "condoms do not eliminate risk but reduce it drastically." As well, SWAT also promotes other methods of being sexual ... other than intercourse.

Your constant "moral" avenue on this issue, suggests to me that you are taking a "reality" of life and condemning people for it. If people don't think as you, are they morally wrong? Will they go to hell? Is sex to be a taboo subject where men and women aren't aware of the facts? Is this your reality?

You mention that statistics indicate that "abstinence among university students is on the increase"; are you not aware that you could obtain stats for any line of argument. Obviously you just want to make a point, regardless of its impact.

Your reference to the Catholic Church not only was ridiculous but obviously demonstrates where your bias lies. As you stated, "they do not opt for a condom solution", yet it was not long ago when the Vatican had stock in the condom industry. Is one's life based solely on whether they adhere to the doctrine of the church? Have we as a society regressed to this ... where sexuality is hidden, the pure virgin lives and the sexually active is condemned to die (at the hands of a disease).

As a woman, I found it quite appalling that you placed "date rape" is on your list of sexual activities. To begin, rape, of any type is not a sexual act but rather a method of exploiting power and control. It is not mere "exploitation" - a very clean word for such a monstrous act.

To end, I would like to give you two words to add to your vocabulary: empowering and normalizing. Both are words that for the most part, "condom pushers" are enforcing. Through discussing safe(r) sex and condoms we are enabling individuals to make choices based on a knowledge base. We do not promote or "con" people into having sex ... we are empowering them to make the decision.

I hope that in the future, you would "try" to attend a "condom pushing" session. You might learn that we are not individuals who have stock in condom companies ... but rather students who are trying to promote responsibility.

Leah White
SWAT peer educator.

Unfounded and Inaccurate

I am writing (sic) in response to an article, "Conned by the Condom Pushers: Alternatives to Current Safer Sex Strategies" published last week in the Brunswickan. The author John Valk, a member of the campus ministry, accused the Visual AIDS poster presentation of having been misleading to its viewers. It is Mr. Valk who has been misleading. He was correct in suggesting that an aim of the display was to educate people about condom use so as to reduce the risk of AIDS. But his statement that "condoms have a high failure rate" was totally unfounded and inaccurate.

I am a member of SWAT (Sex

Without AIDS Today), a University based group of peer educators concerned with the spread of AIDS and other STDs on campus. Our aim has been to convince students to protect themselves with a condom if they are going to have sex. We do not wish to get involved in the moral issues surrounding premarital sex and are in no way condoning premarital sex. But we are aware of the facts and the statistics say that at least 87% of students on UNB campus are sexually active. Whether or not abstinence among University students is on the rise is irrelevant to us when we know that such a great number are still having sex. Our purpose is to provide students with knowledge (sic) about safer sex techniques so that they may protect themselves from nasty diseases such as AIDS. Educating people about safer sex is a difficult task and unfortunate articles such as the one written by Mr. Valk makes our job even harder.

We wish to invite Mr. Valk to come witness one of our SWAT sessions that he has been so eager to criticize. He would then see that we suggest students use condoms with nonoxynol-9, a spermicide that adds better protection than unlubricated condoms by both eradicating any viruses as well as increasing lubrication which will subsequently lessen the chances of condom breakage. We also suggest using a spermicidal foam for added protection. We demonstrate the way in which to open the condom packaging so as not to damage the latex and we tell our students about the detrimental effects of using an oil-based lubricant with a condom and recommend that they use a water-based lubricant. We even show the students how to correctly put on a condom, using a wooden model of course. This is not all, we even tell students which condoms are the most reliable and we invite them to examine the number of different brands that we have on display.

The education we provide greatly increases the effectiveness of the condom. If an individual follows a few easy but very important steps they will be safe from unwanted infections. I hope anyone who read Mr. Valk's smear of the "Condom Crusade" saw it for what it was, simply a blinded attempt to scare the students in to celibacy. This routine is greatly outdated and detrimental to our young people. If Mr. Valk is eager to criticize someone why doesn't he take out his frustrations on the sexually explicit and highly influential mass media who so eagerly display "frenzied fornication".

SWAT (Sex Without AIDS Today)

Information Incorrect

I feel compelled to respond to the diatribe by John Valk in last week's Bruns. It was filled with incorrect information. First, the Visual AIDS Exhibition was never intended to be an educational program about AIDS. It is an exhibit that is aimed at public awareness, and attempts to stimulate people to discuss the issues around the public representation of AIDS.