

Editorial / Mugwump

EDITORIAL

BY KAREN BURGESS

Over the past two weeks UNB's campus has been overrun by reporters, camera crews and photographers from every news agency one can think of. Now *Donahue* has called the Student Union. What could be next? The media seem to be settling in quite comfortably to life on campus thank-you very much, and one reader's comment that perhaps Geraldo would be interested in featuring the UNB-Yaqzan story on his show seems grossly ironic because he's pretty much the only person who hasn't called either The Brunswickan or the Student Union looking for a comment.

Certainly a more welcome call was received at the Bruns over the past week. Camille Paglia (who is well used to the media attention with which we've been barraged, her books and essays receiving almost as much attention as her outspoken and in-your-face camera personality) agreed to speak with us about her views on the whole affair.

While trying not to impose on the interview which the Bruns' Assistant Sports Editor Luke Peterson was having with Paglia, I couldn't resist asking her a few questions about what we at the office affectionately refer to as 'The Feeding Frenzy,' especially after learning that in her duties as a professor at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia include lecturing on the mass media.

She had some interesting things to say about the student press, the fallout from the Yaqzan thing, and how a tiny paper from the Maritimes precipitates (UNBPRI's word du jour) a nation-wide debate.

"Your incident is happening in the context of the Antioch college guidelines which have created a storm down here. I have been very frustrated down here just pushing and pushing these issues and all of a sudden the Antioch thing seems to have made everyone understand for the first time. There's been major recantations," she

SEX, MATH, AND CANADIAN CULTURE: THE YAQZAN THING CONTINUES

explained.

Are people really reacting against political correctness? Is that why so many people with no connection to the university whatsoever have become interested in this issue? She thinks so.

"There's been a tremendous resensitization about it, and I think that your thing is happening at a particular moment. I think this is wonderful, I mean, I absolutely adore all the attention that you're getting."

It's a shame not everyone on campus shares her enthusiasm.

Paglia said that when her writings first started getting attention, there was a similar ground swell of opposition which was voiced by the public to the administrators at the college where she taught. Take a look at *Sex, Art, and American Culture*. She does, after all, list her name and position with the University of the Arts in Philadelphia in the back of her book, which contain writings which are at least as controversial as Yaqzan's Opinion.

This reminded me of a comment, made to me by an avid reader of Paglia's books. It was proposed to me that had Paglia herself come to UNB, and expressed the same views expressed by Yaqzan, that UNB would still want to hire her. And why not? She is, like it or not, one of the foremost authorities on sexual relations in North America today.

I'm trying to imagine the swift action which would be taken if someone on campus started a rumor circulating that Paglia was being hired on at UNB to lecture while she completes her next book. I can almost see the veritable blizzard of press releases which would immediately be sent throughout the country on the PRI tax free. Denials, clarifications, restatements, carefully chosen and well-mixed words.

Ah, yes, well I always did enjoy a white Christmas.

MUGWUMP

BY LILITH

I have always wanted to write a Mugwump. I'm doing it for a number of reasons. First of all, due to the Yaqzan affair and the resultant flood of "Thud and Blunder" submissions, the rest of the paper is kind of scanty on content. Oooooohhh...big one page Entertainment section, with the lengthiest piece being essentially an account of the Goose Lane Editions "Velveeta and Miramachi Magic" wine and cheese at the Beaverbrook (which considering that it included the launch of Herb Curtis book, Miramachi Magic would not be inappropriate. I would say that that stuff is "an acquired taste"...you know it I'm sure. It's the one with the fish on the bottle. I knew a little old lady who used to drink it mixed with Fresca. Bleecchh...). So, I ran away early this week...at around 9. Anyway, I called the office to talk to my boy(friend), your regular Mugwumper and he was severely stressed and only just starting his work. In, part then, I have ulterior motives in taking on this task. I do hope to see "Mr. Cranky" sometime before 1994. Besides, we've been joking that part of my Honoraria at the Bruns contingent upon keeping the Managing Editor sufficiently depressed so that the rest of the staff can bear to work with him.

As entertainment editor, I been able to meet and speak to some people that I've admired, but this week was the first time that I got "star-struck." I answered the phone last week and a woman asked for Luke Peterson. I figured that she must be a phys-ed type wanting to speak to him about a sports story.

"I'm sorry, Luke is not in at the moment, may I ask who's calling please?"

"Yes, this is Professor Camille Paglia calling from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia..."

Clunk (that was my jaw on the desk.)!

"...and he was going to forward some material to me, if you could get him to send that to my agent in New York..."

"Ahhhhh..." my is jaw hovering around mid-knee somewhere..."I'll just pass you over to our editor-in-chief..."

"KAREN...It's Camille Paglia...THE CAMILLE PAGLIA. OH MY GOD!"

While I was first introduced to her name in Professor Barry Cameron's Critical Theory course (mandatory mind-warp for honours English students...this exercise in hermeneutics that you just have to keep

DE-STRESSING, HERO WORSHIP AND THE UNMERCIFUL EDITORIAL KNIFE

telling yourself "It's not what you learn, it's how you learn it..."), I have since bought both of her books, and believe that you either hate her with vehemence or idolize her. I think that I can safely say that I fall into the fan club side of it. I think that she's one of the most interesting phenomena to hit (not an inappropriate word choice) literary theory, pop culture and feminism in a long time. While I can't say that I agree with everything she says, I think she's provocative in the extreme. She has been the catalyst for some interesting polarization within the feminism movement and the discussion that she has aroused on the goals and leadership of the feminist movement has been a long time coming.

I have to say that Luke took a lot of initiative to track her down (this is the epitome of phone tag...her voice mail message [reproduced in a recent issue of Harper's] is three years long). I'm extremely jealous and wish that I'd thought of it first. Way to go Luke. "Aaaaawwwwwwsoooooommmme!!!"

One negative thing about losing so much of my section space (however, I was happy to not have to deal with a lot of material this week, because I'm really sick with the flu. When I cough, it sounds like a seal barking...) is that I have to make choices on what to cut. Unfortunately, last week I had to axe a couple of reviews. That's unfair for both the people who took the time and energy to write the review (Sorry Kate. Sorry Randall.) and the people who expected their events to get coverage (Sorry Nancy at ONSTAGE. Sorry to all at Theatre UNB. Sorry to all who use What's Gwan On as a promotional space). It's hard to balance the section so that the stuff is reasonably timely, and you're being fair in dishing out coverage on a weekly basis. I had the hardest time figuring out how to get passes for Garnet Rogers, then an impossible time hunting down people who would like to go and didn't already have plans. I spent so much time on the phone looking for someone to go that I could have used the same block of time to go myself and write the review. Then, of course, on Monday after the concert twenty people tell they would have loved to have gone. So, where were all these enthusiastic people when I was trying to get them on the phone before the concert? Unfortunately, in the long run, there probably wouldn't have been room to run it anyway.



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