

Editorial & Mugwump

EDITORIAL

GUEST EDITORIAL BY JAMES ROWAN

In the 1960s, the star of the student movement was in the ascendant. Tyrannical administrations everywhere were cowering in fear of a newly energetic and confident student body; these new students were aware of their rights and were prepared to fight for them. When Norman Strax refused to go quietly, all hell broke loose. Sit-ins, protests, demonstrations outside the Old Arts Building, the censorship and shut down of *The Brunswickan*, the oldest student publication in all of Canada...everything went haywire. Then the movement died.

Fast forward to the early 1980s and The Bostitch Years. I have no personal recollection, but from everything I've read, the students were powerful back then—powerful and dangerous. The student movement today barely deserves the title movement—student stagnation would be more appropriate. And yet, there is more being done than the average student realizes. The three chief bodies of the student movement as we know it today are the student government, the student press and the student body itself.

The members of student government are supposed to be the leaders of our movement, the agitators, the organizers. With them as a lightning rod collecting and directing the push of the students, we are supposed to be presenting a strong unified front to the government and to the administration. The student government, in addition to administering the services that the students pay for with their activity fees, services which they have a right to expect, are responsible for entertaining the students, keeping them healthy, safe and secure. They are responsible for defending the interests of the students throughout the corridors of power, working behind the scenes to make the changes that need to be made, as well as publicly acting when regulations and procedures of the unreal world of the university system lag behind the reality of the current situation. Needless to say, this doesn't always happen.

While their internal role is what we care most about, student governments everywhere also take it upon themselves to represent the students to the larger community, and to take their concerns to that community. Many issues affect students in the municipal, federal and provincial government arenas, and someone has to do something about them—almost by default, the student government was chosen to take up this role. Unfortunately, most student organizations have enough troubles keeping their own houses in order, and the external role is the orphan; it is only in strong, rich and well organized student unions that truly effective external campaigning can be undertaken. As a result, the UNB Student Union's efforts have been much more consistent than STU's—where stability had hit such a low last year that they almost needed to elect two people to every position to insure that someone would be back second term. Such concerns will always exist when students who are already busy enough with their studies are

asked to take on greater duties for the good of their peers.

The student press, working completely independently of the student government, is supposed to be keeping an eye on both sides. At the very least, the press must insure the fairness of the policies of both student and school governing bodies, and assess the relative justice of their positions. The role of the student press is every bit as important as student government's; the more effective the student government, the more necessary it is that there be a strong, separate and free student press. Since the executive and legislative are merged so closely into one in student politics, the unassigned role of the judiciary has in some part been taken up by the only impartial observers who have both the knowledge and the interest to see justice done—the student newspapers.

But both of these institutions depend on one another and on the larger body of students if they are to survive. Without a student press, the student governments cannot reach their constituents effectively. The lack of a strong effective student press will almost inevitably destroy the student democratic process. Most campaigns at this level are thinly veiled popularity contests, rendering the idea of representative democracy somewhat ridiculous to begin with—without a way of hearing an impartial assessment of the performance and actions of their representatives, the student body lose all their power. For their part, very few student newspapers could survive without the support of a student government stipend.

Finally, there are the students. They don't always realize what goes on behind the scenes. All they know is what they feel in their gut about their standard of living. They take home some tangible goods, like a Beaverbook, or a Student Directory, or the Brunswickan, or they see a concert courtesy of Campus Entertainment, but they don't see everything that goes on behind the scenes. Most of the time, no one realizes how close things came to disaster but for the intervention of their student representatives. This is partly our failure here in the press, but it is in no small part unavoidable. Very few students see the thirty to forty hour work weeks that the editors of the Brunswickan put into the paper twenty seven times a year, or the work that gets done over the summer to get a paper ready for fall. No one sees the editors working to three or four in the morning on Wednesdays before they go to their seminars and classes Thursday morning—they just notice the fatigue on our faces. No one else really sees or hears the way that the Student Union volunteers sometimes get trapped in their offices for hours at a time fielding emergency calls—calls from students receiving hard treatment from the University or the government, idiotic changes to education policy, problems with the supplement that just went to the printers, hundreds of Orientation emergencies, grant deadlines, travel arrangements, rescheduled meetings with Ministers and Presidents...all most students notice is that they don't get their essays in on time much.

There is a point to this editorial—no one sees the work behind the scenes, only the finished products. Some people are satisfied by this product and never give it a second thought; rare is the student that realizes that without volunteers, that newspaper or book or project or concert would never have existed and might not exist in the future. Some students are unsatisfied by what they see—but instead of volunteering to help and improving the product, they simply complain. If you won't work with us, we can't do it for you.

MUGWUMP

BY KAREN BURGESS

Well, as you may have noticed, there's a slight change in the editorial page. No, there has been no coup d'état, and I have not been victim of a hostile takeover by my Managing Editor. We just decided to switch columns for this week.

The Student Union did, however, invade *The Brunswickan* environment for a brief, unorganized frenzy of newspaper production over the last week. They used *The Bruns'* production facilities to lay-out the "vote education" supplement which appeared in Wednesday's *Daily Gleaner* and can be found alongside your friendly *Brunswickans* this week.

I must admit the prospect of allowing the enemy behind our defensive lines was distressing, but then, it occurred to me that it would be nice to let them see how difficult a Brunsie's job really is. They sit in their plush offices all day not knowing the hell we student journalists face on the front lines to sustain the balance of power and campus life as they know it. Someone has to defend that wall...

They co-operated quite nicely, although they allowed themselves to blunder into the classic newspaper land mines—typesetting all night when all the files were supposed to be brought in on disk, erasing seven pages of computer layout, having too many officers and not enough soldiers. For my part, I volunteered to help them, and was duly admitted to the uniformed ranks of "Team

Education" (I got a T-shirt).

Well, to give credit where it's due, they did just fine; but of course, they did have extensive assistance from our double agent, James, who is also Student Publications Editor with the SU. And the front page photo was taken by one of our Photo Editors. And the political cartoon was drawn by our Features Editor/Graphic Artist. And I did a re-write on one of the press releases. And the Banners look deceptively like the ones we use on *The Bruns*...

Strategically, however, the whole plan was a disaster. The SU battalion failed to take seriously enough the tenuous ground on which they stood with their suspicious temporary allies. They agreed to clean up the office after their manoeuvres but apparently had too many casualties and felt they needed time to regroup. By the time you read this however, *The Bruns* office will be spotless, as the new VP University Affairs promised to personally come and clean up the compound after we completed production of this issue—he's a former *Dome* man, so he knows a bit of what it's like in the trenches.

An interesting thought occurred to me however, now that the SU have been trained in production procedures, they could spend some time volunteering at *The Bruns*. After all, council meetings are only being held every two weeks this year, instead of on a weekly basis, but councilors still get the same honoraria. Granted, there are a dedicated few who take their involvement on the SU Council very seriously and volunteer themselves regularly for dangerous committee assignments, but many do not. They could be well used here. We might lose a few of them, but that's war folks. They gotta earn their keep.

This martial diatribe brought to you by the person who called me a "feminista" this week, and by the letter Q.



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The Brunswickan, while being an open forum for the viewpoints and opinions of all UNB students, may refuse any submission that is judged to be racist, sexist, libellous, or containing attacks of a strictly personal nature. The Brunswickan reserves the right to edit for brevity. Letters generally shouldn't exceed 300 words in length and must contain your signature, student number and phone number, or it will NOT be printed.

All copy submitted must be double spaced, on one side of the page only and must be legible. If we can't read it, we won't print it. The Brunswickan now accepts copy on 3 1/2 inch disk, either Macintosh or MS-Dos format.

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