

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Dave Mazerolle



mugwump journal

By DAVID MAZEROLLE
Editor-in-Chief

UNB needs Election Act for smoother voting

Last week's Student Union election ran smoothly and no winning candidate has had his win disputed because of polling station irregularities. The election can be considered successful from this point of view, considering the high voter turnout (35%, the second highest in Student Union history). For this, the Chief Returning Officer, Jane Cunningham, and the two Deputy Returning Officers, Chris Brading and Sandra Smith, should be congratulated.

There is however, room for improvement. There was very little advance publicity for the election. There could have been a van going around campus with a megaphone, reminding people that it was election day. There also could have been posters in all the buildings telling where the polling stations were. We cannot take it for granted that UNB students will automatically know everything about the democratic process on campus.

The ballots were not well done. They were poorly made in a design sense, with no boxes to fill in the voter's mark. Also, there were no clear instructions on the ballots as to how many candidates to vote for.

A lot of the problem stems from the out-dated election instructions. For example, the instructions state the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) is supposed to take the names of candidates to the University Secretary, James Woodfield, to have him get the ballots made. That practice was changed years ago. The elections are run now with simply a knowledge of how it was done in the years immediately preceding. This leaves lots of room for mistakes if the operative principle is "Well, this is how the CRO did it last year."

What the Student Union needs is an Election Act, which firmly states the procedures from beginning to end. It should cover fully the responsibilities of the CRO and the DRO's, including their authority to settle disputes and their obligation to the procedure of counting the ballots.

There should be a section dealing with the requirements of publicizing the election, including candidates' submissions in the **Brunswickan**, announcements, and posters directing voters to the polling stations.

On ballots, it should be explained, when one may vote for more than one candidate on the ballot, whether some seats are for a full term and some for a half term. Ballots should be presented on computer cards, thus making it possible for the counting to be done on a computer.

With a clear policy, an Election Act, the elections can be run smoothly, with little left to chance.

I would like to start this week's column by congratulating people. My first best wishes go to Larry Fox, the President-Elect of the Student Union. Larry has pledged co-operation as one of his primary claims. I heartily wish him good luck and look forward to reporting on his actions now. Larry, you've got an awful big pair of shoes to fill.

My congratulations extend to all other winners in the recent election. I am sure there will be a whole new character to this Students' Representative Council, and I hope the change will bring about a sense of harmony that has been so sorely lacking in the past.

Congratulations must definitely go out to Richard Hutchins, a true world citizen. His Hunger Strike of last week created a tremendous amount of publicity for all efforts aiding famine victims in Ethiopia. Hutch's goal of \$10,000 was reached through the evening of Friday, 23 November. Remember that the famine has not gone away, and continue to support any fund-raising effort you can to alleviate starvation in North Africa. Hutch's own goal was reached, but we cannot sit back now and think there is no more to accomplish.

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Did anybody know Doug and the Slugs were scheduled to appear on campus last week? No? Neither did the campus booking service, CSL. The show has been rescheduled (like Rough Trade, et. al.) when they were reminded the night before the scheduled time that Doug and the boys were coming. "Rescheduled" and "CSL" have become synonymous. CSL, for the last word in campus entertainment...

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Bill Traer, the Sports Editor of our esteemed paper, asserts that, contrary to popular (and sometimes unpopular) belief, he has not resigned from his position here. Bill, or "Nick" as he is called here in Room 35, also has a message for the person who first suggested such a thing — he's a tall thin guy, talks a lot, leaves office soon—but said message is too rough for the mums and dads of the editors, who read the **Brunswickan** relegiously, to see in their childrens' paper.

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All **Brunswickan** staff members are urged to attend the General Meeting on Friday, 30 November in the **Brunswickan** offices, Room 35 of the SUB. This meeting is a very important one, with the businesses of business and the business of pleasure on the agenda.

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Be aware that next week's issue is the last before the Christmas holidays. Make sure you bring in your classified ads, Upcomin' notices, letters to Blood and Thunder and any other submissions this week.

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Credibility. Does the **Brunswickan** have any? You tell us. Please let us know what you feel about the paper—its editorial policies, its quality of coverage, anything, we appreciate you comments and welcome them as indications of how we can serve you better. Please write to me at this address: Blood and Thunder, **Brunswickan**, Room 35, Student Union Building. Drop it off at our offices or send it in the mail. If you're on campus, you can send it free, through campus mail.

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