

mugwump journal

By Kathryn Wakeling

If the shock of midterms left you boggled, then last week's Christmas exam schedule must have left you faint. Time sure flies when you are having fun, eh?

I don't know about the rest of the campus - but October sure seemed to be a fast month ... heh, heh, before you know it December will be here with all its ho, ho merriment. I noticed the other day that the stores are starting in early on the Yuletide spirit already by putting up all their decorations in expectations of the big day. Just wait until the Christmas music starts pouring out of the speakers everywhere you go.

It's enough to make a person go humbug!!

Speaking of the Christmas season ... I hope everyone who is going home or traveling over the holidays has made their reservations (or is planning to soon). Already seats are getting hard to book for the dates you may want to come and go on. I made reservations in October and couldn't get a seat before the fourth of January for coming back to Fredericton.

Good luck and good booking.

It was really annoying and yet dismaying to see the work of obnoxious high school kiddies at the SUB doorway on Friday night during the CHSR Disco. As far as I know their presence was the first for this year, and I'm sure I speak for the staff who had to deal with them when I say that I hope it was their last visit. Once again a large door window was broken and glass from liquor bottles of various sorts was strewn all over the road and parking lot to the convenience of the parked cars who had to drive around it later on. One feels furious at their stupidity at first and then when watching them - underaged, drunken sots (who obviously weren't able to hold their liquor very well), cursing and swearing because they couldn't get into the pub. Who knows what could have happened if they gained entrance.

It's easy to say that yes, we were all in high school once, but the SUB is for the students of UNB and we shouldn't have to put up with that kind of behaviour from the schools that happen to be around the university campus. It's getting to be more than just a pain in the neck.

I'd be interested in hearing from the campus on this issue. For many students this is not a new topic, but I feel it is a relevant topic when it interferes with activities on campus. If you would like to forward an opinion please send them in c/o The Editor, The Brunswickan, Rm 35, SUB.

On the subject of personal views, I have been thinking of introducing a new section to the paper. As well as having a sound off page which allows students to write in to the paper about anything they want to write about, I thought of introducing a section dealing with one particular topic concerning some aspect of student life (whether on or off campus). Any ideas for topics are welcome and can be sent to me care of the Bruns, as well as what you think of this idea.

Remember that in order to be successful I need your feedback. My reasons for introducing a "soapbox" for students is to give you a chance at editorials. Sometimes a letter isn't enough. If given the right amount of input I think this could be a great section of the paper so let's see some kind of response to the high school problem mentioned above. Have I been fair in my views, how do you perceive the problem, do you have any answers?

I look forward to hearing from you.

This week I would like to welcome John Brooks and Rob Hammond to the paper. Both are a great help to the paper. Unfortunately Thursday was a really bad day this week and I mean really bad. But don't give up the ghost guys there is a pot of gold over that rainbow ... and believe me it's one heck of a great party!

The time is here for elections of the SRC offices but for once apathy is not running its usual course. It is comforting to note that there are two substantial candidates running for the presidency. It's nice to know that this year students can make a choice based on policy and candidate ability. May the best man win on the votes of conscientious student voting.

Well, I do think it's time to go. I don't think that I forgot anything this week Mike - and if I did, c'est la vie my man!
A special hello to Stephen this week who scored the big touchdown this week but failed to make the finals. To lose is hard times but remember you still have that macho image ... even if it is going coatless this year.

sound off NOVEMBER 9, 1979 THE BRUNSWICKAN 7

A media conspiracy?

Dear Readers:

Four points that I would like to direct to your attention:

- (1) The real cause for student apathy at UNB.
- (2) Lack of responsible journalism in the Brunswickan.
- (3) Lack of representation in the Brunswickan.
- (4) Separation of the media.

Last week's headlines "Apathy is hallmark for upcoming SRC elections" should probably have read: "Brunswickan Cause of Student Apathy". It would have been more appropriate written that way because of the Bruns' attitude towards student government and their policy of crapping of anyone who dare volunteer their time and effort to help out. No damn wonder people are skeptical to gain a seat on the Student Representative Council when they risk their effort only to commit suicide in the end. When was the last time that you read anything positive about the SRC in the Bruns? Can't remember? You bet you can't. If it seems that the SRC executive and the media are always in conflict, it's only because of the Bruns' strange tendency to jump from one side of the fence to the other in order to create a confrontation. We're damned if we do; we're damned if we don't.

What is needed in the Brunswickan today is responsibility in journalism - something severely lacking. Here is a newspaper paid for by the students and claims to be for the students and yet does not allow the students the right to make their own decisions on issues. Week after week the Bruns "reports" on the events occurring within the Student Union and yet the student is consistently offered only one side of the issue to read; a side that literally reeks of bias. Maybe definitions of the word

"reporting" differ to great degrees amongst different people but surely some investigation into facts must occur before the story is published for the reader's deliberation. This rarely occurs in our student newspaper.

A practice which was explained to me several weeks ago by one loyal Bruns staffer was the manner in which the weekly Editorial is decided upon. In all but two of the ten issues so far this term, the same person has had the unchallenged privilege of expounding his/her theories to the students of UNB. Could it be the Editor? No way. Perhaps one of the other department editors? Wrong again. This person, with no status other than writing editorials, is allowed to walk in to the editorial meeting each week and dictate with apparently little feedback, what everyone is going to read. No questions are asked as to the legitimacy of the content or the dollar figures tossed around. Once that person's mind is made up, the rest of the staff shrugs their shoulders and goes about their duties. That person is not even obligated to sign the editorial. The potential for abuse is unlimited and has been realized consistently. How representative is the Brunswickan of the students of UNB? I believe it to be highly UNREPRESENTATIVE and should be regarded with much skepticism when being read.

What has been apparent over the last two months is the strange alliance between the Bruns and CHSR. In the "real world" a healthy competitive atmosphere exists between all forms of media. Not so on campus because of the aims of the executives of the two organizations. What one media shouts, the other one echoes. As a matter of fact, it has been the same people doing the shouting and the echoing as the respective

executive bodies become so entangled that it is very difficult to differentiate between the two. The aim of the alliance is obvious by this very issue with the Brunswickan support for one particular presidential candidate and also the frequency with which they have accommodated his photo into most every issue this term. They may call it "The Making of the President". More appropriately it should be "The End of the Student Union". The potential results are obvious: disaster for the student body.

It will be of great amusement to view how the Bruns will react to such a letter. Something of this nature usually constitutes an immediate emotional editorial demanding all sorts of unreasonable requests without any forethought. The Bruns always dishes out the criticism but does not handle personal criticism very well. In conclusion, I shall make a few suggestions as to improving the paper so that students are better represented by their own newspaper:

- (1) If there is a story print both sides of the issue and not what you want people to believe. If there isn't a story, don't fabricate one to fill pages - that's National Enquirer stuff; not yours.
- (2) Criticize constructively. Don't always print the negative - it makes for a very dull paper. If something positive occurs, print it.
- (3) Have enough guts to let others write the editorials and learn through it. Most important, substantiate the figures from the source before publishing them.
- (4) Have enough personal integrity to operate your own media without intravention of your competitors. The result is a healthy media atmosphere.

Sincerely
Scott Cronshaw
Comptroller

This is the way it is - Scotty!

Dear Scott:

I have decided to answer your letter and perhaps provide some amusement for you. You stated that the Brunswickan is the cause of student apathy by "crapping of anyone who dares volunteer their time and effort to help out." This, supposedly scares people off from joining council. But no one has to fear being "crapped" upon by the Brunswickan if they are doing a good job.

If the SRC was to do something positive for a change then maybe we would have something positive to write about. To say that we jump from one side of the fence to the other in order to oppose the SRC and create a confrontation is unwarranted. The only time the Brunswickan takes a stand is when we feel there is an issue which requires a stand be taken.

Perhaps the reason that the student is presented with only one side of the story is that we only see one side of the story and that is the side shown to us by the SRC. OUR stories are based on facts and, as anyone knows, are required to be unbiased. Maybe the facts we find conflict with those "facts" you would like us to

find.

Concerning our practice on editorials I would like to explain the process involved. Being that the editorial is the opinion of the staff, the topic and the stand we are to take is discussed by the staff. Whoever writes the editorial is expressing the opinion of the staff not his/herself as you seem to think. Perhaps that you realize your wrong doings and therefore create false impressions of what we on the Bruns staff do in order to pad the effect that this knowledge has on your conscience. You do have a conscience don't you?

Another one of your many misconceptions is that there has to be "a healthy competitive atmosphere between all forms of media." If a radio station and a newspaper are able to combine their efforts they can increase the efficiency of their organizations. Rather than one of us echoing the other we are adding our shouts to theirs in order to correct what we consider to be an obvious wrong. We, both the SRC and the media, have a responsibility to the student and if you are not going to fulfill yours we at least can fulfill ours. We try to do this in the best

way possible and if this requires the co-operation of CHSR and the Brunswickan, so be it.

Perhaps the reason we publish so many photo of Doug Varty is that he does things that require attention of the media. If Perry Thorbourne is so unnewsworthy then he must be lacking in something. Perhaps initiative or a willingness to upset the SRC.

If you want to read stories that won't upset you I suggest YOU read the National Enquirer. They may be more your speed.

I hope this letter was both amusing and emotional enough for you and I apologize (heavy sarcasm) for the lack of a healthy media atmosphere.

Sincerely
Mike MacKinnon
Managing Editor
Brunswickan
and partner in the
conspiracy to create
apathy in the student body.

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