

Blood and Thunder

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rm. 35, Student Union Building, UNB Campus
DEADLINE: 5 p.m. Tuesday

Newspapers supposed to inform

Dear Editor:

It has not been all that long since another exchange of letters on homosexuality made their way into the pages of *The Brunswickan*, and no doubt the current dialogue on the propriety—moral, editorial, or otherwise—of printing FLAG advertisements in the student newspaper will not be the last time the subject of homosexuality on campus comes up. A year and a half ago there was great concern (and in some corners horror) when it was made known that FLAG had actually held several dances on campus. Imagine, homosexuals dancing, drinking, and perhaps even enjoying themselves in a rented space on the University grounds. Well, of course, some students were upset, some were indifferent, some were oblivious and some were in attendance. It is one thing to think that a homosexual may have a beer, or a dance or a laugh in the Social Club or at another campus social spot, but to actually know that a group of these people get together is another thing entirely. At any rate, FLAG stopped having dances on campus and relative calm returned. It probably is better for many to have enemies you do not see than ones you do.

Now there is the issue of FLAG ads appearing almost weekly in this newspaper. It is sad to think that the people who wrote these ads no longer find the walls of toilet cubicles an appropriate or high profile place to solicit what may be seen to be membership in some deviant club. Imagine FLAG deciding to move up-market, to the respectability of a student run newspaper. So much for such an organization remaining hidden and quiet. FLAG certainly could not have assumed that some readers of *The Brunswickan* may have the need to reach out to others, or the need to find out more about the organization and the community. And God forbid to think that there may be the odd sad homosexual out there just waiting to get a telephone number to find out when dancing may be a possibility. I suppose my confusion comes from ignorance and narrow mindedness of those individuals opposed to the *Brunswickan* running FLAG's advertisement. Both the "conscientious reader" and the general tone of *Viewpoint* are homophobic, and yet the opinions held do not address the issue of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of a newspaper

running a paid-for advertisement of a Gay and Lesbian organization. Rather, the point of address seems to be the rightness or the wrongness of homosexuality itself. The issue of editorial license is passed over to the issue of homosexuality in society. The standard responses are all there; that Biblically it is wrong (accepting that the social tolerance Christ preached applied only to heterosexuals); that through "appropriate counselling and services" (not to mention electric shock treatment and so forth) homosexuals can become part of the mainstream, and therefore assumably, the better part of society; that it is disgusting and should be abhorred, suggesting that the understanding of homosexuality expressed here is based solely on some perverse notion of homosexuality as relating only to sexual activity, rather than a mental, social and sexual orientation (just think, there could well be celibate homosexuals in society, maybe even on campus). Finally the opinions suggest that being homosexual and living an open, honest life is both undesirable and unattractive. If knowing one's self is the basis for happiness both as a person alone in the world, as well as a member of society, then more power to those men and women who can know themselves and live rich, meaningful lives. Living unfulfilled in a state of darkness—whether in the idiomatic closet, or in what purports to be a liberal-minded society, is not a desirable state of being. The running of FLAG ads is not threatening; a newspaper is supposed to be a source of information and just because some of the things you read in a newspaper may be of no specific interest, their presence in the newspaper is not wrong.

Inevitably, it seems the dialogue over homosexuality becomes an issue of morals and co-existence. There will always be divisions in opinion about what is morally and in turn sexually right or wrong, of what should be allowed or disallowed. The FLAG advertisement demands nothing, compels no one, and is not in itself offensive. It conveys information which, as in the case of most advertisements, can be digested, thought about, acted upon or ignored. *The Brunswickan* in contracting to print the advertisement made an economic and editorial decision, and therefore the real issue at hand is editorial management and the seemingly censorious nature of some of the *Brunswickan* readership. I am pleased that the editor allowed FLAG's ad to be printed, and I trust that some people may

have been helped by reading about the existence of such an organization.

If, in the future, there is any room for a genuine forum about homosexuality on campus (and indeed there are gay and lesbian students, faculty and staff at UNB) then I trust that the need for retributive letters will cease. Dialogue is important, but until that time, I remain,

A conscientious reader of another bent.

Feminism, Masculinism and Homosexuality

Dear Editor:

Four weeks ago in the *Brunswickan* there was a letter written by "M" which was about physical abuse against women. Two weeks ago J.M. Cogswell wrote a letter in support of "M's" letter; his main argument was that: "Women shouldn't let themselves get slapped around."

Cogswell made a mistake by focusing the problem on the women themselves and in doing so, blaming them for their own physical abuse; the focus lies far beyond the individual; she is not the one to blame.

The focus of the problem should be on our social structure. In our society women are brought up to be passive recipients rather than assertive actors. The fact that women in general have never learned to defend themselves or how to fight is not the fault of women but is a result of their conditioning during the socialization process.

Gradually women are learning self assertiveness but it is a slow process which will require much time and effort until women are able to break out of their traditional roles.

Women are locked into relationships which involve physical abuse for a variety of economic, psychological, and social factors. We suggest that both "M" and Cogswell look further into the subject. There are many books available dealing with this complex issue. So don't blame the victim; she suffers enough without the addition of being told she is responsible for her own abuse.

We would also like to comment on the letter entitled "What Is Masculinism?" by Leonard Green. We would like to know if Mr. Green and the *Brunswickan* have ever heard of the word plagiarism? There seems to be an irresponsible lack of concern about the legal repercussions involved in plagiarism. The letter was a cheap and unimaginative way to get a laugh.

We would also like to respond to a letter two weeks ago in the *Brunswickan* which was written by a "conscientious reader" who opposes homosexuality. The writer's view is that homosexuality is a problem which should be corrected. Firstly, the writer says that he/she feels that homosexuals have the right to services yet by saying that he is against the ads he contradicts. We praise the *Brunswickan* for advertising the F.L.A.G. ads as gays have the right to form support groups just like any other minority group. The writer states that homosexuality should not be advertised as being an attractive and vogue lifestyle; the ads never stated that it is.

Another fault of the letter was that the writer refers to the Bible as his/her main source of support of the argument. We feel that he/she does not have the right to impose his/her own religious convictions on the rest of the university population by opposing the ads. Furthermore, he/she treats homosexuality as a moral problem. We do not see that it is a moral issue at all but rather than it is a matter of personal rights and sexual preference.

The writer has the view that homosexuality is a contagious disease which must be arrested before it eliminates population growth. Homosexuality is a preferred lifestyle, chosen by some, but not all. Reproduction is in no way threatened by this lifestyle. Just because homosexuality is different from the ideas of the heterosexual majority does not mean that is any less healthy than a heterosexual lifestyle.

Members of the Student
Women's Committee
Linda Kalman
Louise Cormier
Kathleen Murphy

Gay students' group needed

Dear Editor:

I am a gay student who has been in the Arts Program of UNB for a number of years.

What I'd like to see is a gay organization on campus. UNB is probably the only university of this size in the continent that has no organization for gays. Dalhousie has one; why shouldn't UNB and STU have one? We undoubtedly have a big enough gay student population to form some sort of positive gay group on campus.

A gay society in this university is a must and I hope to see it in the near future, perhaps as early as next year.

Signed G.P.

Gays receiving hard times

Dear Editor:

Another letter to add to your ever-popular topic of homosexuality.

What is the problem with students on this campus? Obviously they have never been outside their beloved province. I pity them if they go to Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, Quebec City or any other "city" in Canada. How would they handle it? In such "cities" the homosexuals are very visible and are accepted in society. Would these close-minded students spend all their time in a paranoid state? The answer would be yes.

Obviously these people (and I use the word loosely) are unsure about themselves and do not have any intellectual ability to understand human beings. Why do these people feel that homosexuals are going to take over the world? Why do they feel threatened by homosexuals? It is a lifestyle that is becoming accepted by society. It is openly discussed by people and homosexuals openly display their affections towards one another. They are not assaulting young people. They are not recruiting people off the street to become gay. You don't become gay — you are gay — just like you are straight.

Gays in this city are now receiving hard times because some "macho males" decide they must prove their masculinity. That is one quality which I admire in gay men. They do not have to prove anything to anybody. They do not have to prove that they have the necessary "male organs" that some men (?) are proud of. They do not make crude remarks about people who do not fit the "perfect 10" image that many males desire. They accept people at face value regardless of race, religion, age or sexual preference.

I only wish people had the attitudes and values that gays do — then maybe people would get along better with everyone and stop all these arguments and bigotry that has developed. Maybe, just maybe, some males would stop all this "egotistical macho image" they try so hard to display.

As a closing line — take a closer look at your friends and acquaintances — you may discover something you never imagined!!

Signed,
Sandy R.