

Editorial
Mary Rogal-Black

Take it easy: make it a Blockbuster night

Doesn't going to Blockbuster kind of make you sick? I live from day to day trying, in my own way, to be a fairly responsible citizen, be good to other people and think about what kind of world I want to bring my kids into. Then it's the end of the week and I'm ready to forget everything, put my feet up for a while and - whammo! - it's a Blockbuster night.

Greeted by salespeople like a long-lost friend as soon as I walk in the door, I practically sprint past the seedy dishonesty of exchanged hellos. I enjoy friendliness between strangers and have been known to deplore the number of discourteous waiters in Fredericton, but I can't manage to accept the phroness of paying someone to say hello to a neverending stream of strangers.

The next hurdle is finding a path through the racks of strategically placed merchandise to the coveted new releases. Blockbuster has purposely created a maze of goodies to distract the simple video-watcher, turning them into crazed consumers with almost uncontrollable urges to buy Star Trek calendars and Amanda Marshall CDs with that rental of *Happy Gilmore*. They're not even trying to be subtle about it. What do you go to Blockbuster for? Movies, right? They know that. Yet they place a rack of CDs on the shelves in the middle of the highest traffic area, with the new releases on either side. Blockbuster puts things at the tips of our fingers. A boxed set of *Die Hard*, they've got it. Music videos, *X-Files* t-shirts, drama, blood and gore, tears and happy endings. You want to relax at the end of the week and Blockbuster gives you what you want. Or at least it tells you what you want (via those video monitors playing round the clock movie "information" and the Blockbuster theme song) and then gives you that. Even if you know you deserve to relax at the end of the week, you might be suspicious of the blatant manipulation that goes on from every "hello" to "that's due back Sunday at midnight."

The only thing more depressing than Blockbuster's expectation that sensible adults will be easily conned into buying "a little extra" is the knowledge that it works. It's easy to create a consumer: make them stand next to stuff. But I won't hold a faceless corporate entity to blame for the Blockbuster phenomenon. They're only counting on something many of us don't even believe in: the power of the individual. Each person who succumbs to their buy-buy-buy pressure contributes to the profits and every dollar counts. Meanwhile, many UNB students don't vote, protest or speak out because, well, what's the point? I'm only one person.

I'm afraid Blockbuster is smarter than we are. Sure as they're greeting us at the door, they know every person counts. I suspect that the only reason we keep telling ourselves we have no power as individuals is because that's the easy route to take. It's easy to be absolved from guilt and blame when the candidate you didn't vote for or against does something you don't agree with; easy to feel powerless when a large chain moves in and puts small stores out of business; easier to watch imaginary criminals on *NYPD Blue* than real ones on *The National*. I like to take it easy, too; I'm just not sure the easy world is the one I want my kids living in.

One antidote to a Blockbuster night, if you're interested, is a little radio station in your own backyard. It's not trying to sell you much more than a good time, it doesn't have a perfectly engineered assault for your senses and it's not really about learning to enjoy whatever new release you can find on the shelves after the other vultures are done. It's about listening. CHSR-FM is that station you never listen to. Some of the DJ's "um" and "ah" until you want to scream. They play music you haven't seen on the shelves at Blockbuster or heard in rotation on Much Music. Instead, they give you something you don't know you want, something you have to work for - real life and a real community. You give Blockbuster hours of your life. You owe it to yourself to do the same for CHSR. Read this week's insert edition of *Soundcheck* and be prepared to work for entertainment you can respect.

EIC: a work in progress

I'm taking the opportunity this week to go back on a decision I made last week. A letter to the Editor from Martin Yaqzan was published in *Blood and Thunder* last week with selected passages removed because I judged the comments to be particularly offensive. I later regretted the choice and decided to reprint the letter in full this week.

There will always be people and ideas that we don't agree with, but removing them from a public forum only obscures real elements of the ongoing debate about what we want our community to be.

Mudwump

Joseph W.J. FitzPatrick₃

Mud has cooed over many topics so far this year and now it shall ooze into the domain of feminism. This comes to bear particularly because of the peculiar way I was intellectually stimulated by Carla BEY Lee's Womynsey piece which ran last week.

Regarding Women's Studies. The piece reveals that, in fact, Women's Studies does exclude men. This doesn't seem to bother you particularly. The message I got from your article was that men can't handle "women-centered pedagogy."

But, I am wrong. I can not say that women do not react differently that men when confronted with men in history, or men in literature. And why am I so certain of my uncertainty? I can't deny that I personally react differently to a female professor, to a female writer, to a female classmate, although I may personally deny that it has any consequence. But that is a lie. It is not a matter of believing that a man or a woman is a better professor, or historical figure, or writer, or classmate, but recognizing that their gender does make a difference.

Although I tell myself I do not think in this way, I am unable to say that I have not based my reactions to female professors on the relations that I have with my mother, my grandmother, my sisters, my female friends, women in the media, women in fiction, women in movies. To say that I do not consider different things about a female professor than I would a male professor is to deny my own centrism.

It is quantifying this difference which can and must be addressed in an academic setting. We may be told that while there were women writing in the Romantic Period, the men were more important. And some of us believe it. Others read the writings of those women and ask - why are they not mentioned, they seem at least as good as the men we study?

BLOOD & THUNDER
Letters to the Editor

Get the facts straight!

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter to question the competence of the staff news writers. In the past few issues, there have been several notable errors. The error that applies directly to me was the article concerning the EUS Penny Drive. I was very disappointed to see, in the title, a great error in the total raised. The title should have read "170,277 pennies raised," as opposed to "84,589 raised." My question is, how could such an error be made. The actual number was more than double the total printed by your publication? I, personally, sent an article, that specified the total raised, \$1,702.77. It also contained the figure of \$613.02, clearly stating this was the total raised by the *Electrical Engineers*. The seven engineering disciplines together raised \$1469.24.

Upon calling *The Brunswickan* to notify someone of the error, I was told that the writer had investigated the amounts in order to get the totals for Nursing, Business Admin. and CS. I was told that the writer had the total for Engineering. If there was any confusion as to where the total came from, should we not have been contacted? At this time, I would also like to personally thank all those who contributed to this event. I assure you that the total of \$1702.77 was collected, and presented to the Boys and Girls Club (see upcoming *Pillar* article).

The second noticeable error was in an earlier issue of *The Brunswickan* concerning the Neville House bed push. This was wrongly reported, in very large letters, to be the Bridges House bed push. Again, how could such an error be made? This particular event is an annual one, raising several thousand dollars for charity.

In a newspaper such as *The Brunswickan*, being "Canada's oldest official student publication," one would expect a certain level of journalistic ability to be found in the writers. As far as I know, one of the first traits of a journalist is that they can report facts accurately! This would appear to be lacking, and is very disappointing to see as a UNB student. I hope that in the future, the time will be taken to ensure that what you are printing is correct.

Stephen Meyer
Organiser, 1996 EUS Penny Drive

Team's success not reflected

To the Editor:

I am downright appalled by the article "National Disappointment." How do you expect the university to have respect for you, if you can't support your Varsity teams when they need it?

For the last two and half months, I have been drowned in commitment, working three hours a day, five days a week, (not including games or road trips). This was also the case for my 18 enthusiastic teammates who were all striving for one goal. Now, I'm sure my teammates would agree, that things did not go as planned, but sometimes things don't work out in your favor.

Nevertheless, we are still AUA champions; we just won our 25th AUA title for UNB, and are currently sixth in Canada, a position many teams would kill to be in. To read your incompetent article was not only a slap in the face, but also a stab in the back. I saw many of my teammates very upset by some careless and unacceptable writing. The point being: if our school isn't behind us, then who is?

I realize, however, the school does care and this is just another reason to throw a pile of *Brunswickans* in the recycling bin.

I would like to thank UNB for sending us to British Columbia for the Nationals. Even though the scores may not have been in our favor, the memories are something we'll cherish for a lifetime.

As far as *The Brunswickan* is concerned, I think it is clear that even in our most horrific moment at the nationals, it does not compare to your one-sided, non-edited reporting in the last edition. Thanks for your support!

Rachel Bartlett
Field Hockey Player

Congrats for balanced coverage

To the Editor:

In response to Cynthia Kirby's story "Aquian Editor on probation" in the November 8th issue of *The Brunswickan*, I would like to thank Cynthia Kirby for doing a fine job covering the Aquian Board of Directors meeting on Wednesday, November 6th. Considering the tension and borderline personal attacks that were present at that meeting, you have done an excellent job at being impartial and separating the relevant from the irrelevant. I look forward to reading more of your articles.

Adam Jarvis
Managing Editor, *The Aquian*

Yaqzan offers Bruns criticism (unplugged)

Editor's Note: The following is the unedited version of a letter that appeared in Blood and Thunder last week.

To the Editor:

I have been reading *The Brunswickan* for the last 30 years during its 130 years of publication, and have made occasional contributions to it. As a matter of fact, an opinion column by me published exactly three years ago on November 5, 1993, led to my early retirement as a member of the faculty at UNB. May I make a few comments and suggestions.

1. I find this year's large format of *The Brunswickan* inconvenient and unwieldy. Unless the vast majority of its readers prefer it, you should go back to the earlier format.
2. The print size is too small. You should adopt the same size as in *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto or *The Telegraph Journal* of Saint John.
3. There is no such word as "womyn." You should correct such errors when your contributors misspell.
4. With reference to your editorial of November 1, 1996, the use of the word "alleged" in reporting a crime that has not been established, is perfectly reasonable. While it would not be appropriate to use the word "alleged" to report that a murder, car accident, fire or an earthquake had occurred, a reporter must use "alleged" to indicate the possible "murderer" or the "driver responsible" for the car accident.

In the same vein, when a person claims to have been sexually assaulted, a reporter must use the word "alleged" with the name of the accused. There is no question of "gender politics," or the bias on the part of the "male dominated media" in such reporting, as suggested by Mr. Mark Pederson of CBC, and quoted by you in your above editorial. The last sentence in your above editorial reads as follows: "There is no substantial legal reason to 'allege' about sexual assault and, despite our reluctance to believe the horror of rape, it's past time for the media to admit that sexual assault is just as real as car theft."

Whether or not there is "substantial legal reason" to use the word "alleged," it would be inaccurate for a reporter to say that a sexual assault actually took place, unless the reporter himself or herself was the guilty party. You quote your legal advisor as saying: "The thing is to avoid the imputation of guilt. Sometimes the word 'alleged' helps to do this, sometimes it is just a thin veneer over a defamatory imputation of guilt which is nonetheless defamatory."

To impute is to attribute blame, and it is not a reporter's job to blame the accused of the crime or the accuser for making a false charge. The use of the word "alleged" does imply that the reporter is simply reporting and not making a judgment about the veracity of the accuser. Otherwise, if you don't use the word "alleged," how do you avoid the "imputation of guilt?"

Your expression, "horror of rape," reminded me of a question I had asked a female faculty member at McMaster University, in the context of the furor following my article on 'date rape' published in *The Brunswickan* in 1993: "If a prostitute does not get paid by a customer, would it be correct to describe it as a rape?" She did not answer the question. Today, any unwanted sexual intercourse is described as "rape," but the "horror of rape" for a prostitute has to be very different from that of an unsuspecting virgin.

5. Mr. FitzPatrick, your Managing Editor, is quite correct in surmising that some students would be better-off having been trained in a specific trade rather than enrolling at a university and obtaining a degree. A university education should not depend upon a person's financial capacity, rather his or her mental capacity. I wrote about it in *The Brunswickan* sometime in the early seventies.

6. *The Brunswickan* had a tradition of an "Opinion Column" written by a student or a faculty member, besides the opinions expressed by the editor or its other regular columnists. It would be a good idea to continue that tradition, although some faculty members are liable to be reluctant to take a chance in view of what happened to me for writing an opinion column.

7. A university student's mind should be exposed to something intellectually more stimulating than the musings of homosexuals and the feminists. Homosexuality is at best an aberration in nature, and the feminist philosophy simply violates human nature. There is little intellectual content in the interminable discussions about them.
8. You should invite some of the international students to provide a weekly feature about their countries and customs, problems and possible solutions. Some students in the sciences, engineering and the computer science, and for that matter, nursing, can write articles that would be informative and entertaining for the students in other fields.
9. It would be helpful if your contributors indicated their field of specialization and/or the year at the university. *The Brunswickan* did do exactly that in the past. It is helpful in determining whether the writer deserves credit or sympathy during a critical review, or accolade for his or her ideas.
10. The commercial ads should be kept at a minimum.

Martin Yaqzan
Retired (Jan 1994) member of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, UNB.

Am I a latent feminist?

One of the principle reasons that Women's Studies has remained a program with a relatively small enrollment is that it is a separate program. All the introductory levels should touch on Women's Studies (maybe even have a guest lecturer for a week or two). There should be a concerted effort to address women, and feminist thought in lectures. This will not weaken a curriculum, unless there is no effort to tie it in to the rest of the course. After all, most standard texts should be read with a critical eye. What the standard texts omit, is often as significant as what they include. I believe strongly that leaving Women's Studies as a distinct program with little correlation from the general introductory courses is quite useless to all except those few students in Women's Studies.

And let me say this one of the reasons I have not taken a Women's Studies course is that it would not serve my current degree program. Comfort or alienation has nothing to do with it. Now that I am dauntingly close to the end of my program, I am strongly considering at least auditing WS 1000. To me, Women's Studies presents a challenge to the education I have received so far, a challenge to accommodate a different type of thought into my education. And those that dispute that Women's Studies presents a challenge which should be met, rather than ignored, have walled themselves into an ivory tower.

And now for the metaphorical conceit: without hot water, there will only be cold. Cold is numbing, but after a while, it begins to feel warm, even comforting. When you are out in the cold, for a long time, there is a creeping, deceptively warm and drovy feeling, which though soothing is deadly. To save us, then, dash us with the burning water, crack our shells, set our selves free from this icy embrace.

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The opinions contained in this newspaper are those of the individual writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Brunswickan*.

All members of the university community are encouraged to contribute to *The Brunswickan*. While we endeavour to be an open forum for a variety of viewpoints and ideas, we may refuse any submission considered racist, sexist, libellous, or those 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 they 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* accepts copy on 3.5 inch disk, either Macintosh or MS-DOS format. Articles printed in *The Brunswickan* may be freely reprinted provided proper credit is given. 'Cause nobody likes a plagiarist.

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