

CARSON INTERVIEW- WED

In the second part of an interview with Wayne Carson, Student Union President, our reporter asked Carson of his feelings on CFS National Student Day and particularly the CFS NB march.

Q. What is your feeling about the march on the legislature that took place this term? Do you think it was a success?

I guess I feel that the march provided two opportunities.

One, it was a form in which students could publicly express their concerns regarding government actions on legislation that affects students and specifically things like bill C-33, GST, Student Loan Programs, summer employment, those types of issues.

The idea of a march is to focus attention on students and student's issues. To that extent I think we were a very big success for National Student Day. Something which has to be clarified about the march is that it was organized by CFS NB. And not the UNB Student Union. But when you look at CFS NB and the individuals who organized it, it was Gary Clarke our VP external, who is also chairperson of CFS NB as well as our external activities committee, who were at the forefront.

So, it was a UNB organized event under the sort of mask of CFS NB. So the first opportunity that I indicated was to express our concern publicly about student issues and the march provided that opportunity. We had, I guess, over 200 students. . . marched from here to the Legislature and I think we achieved that.

The second idea behind the march was to have the mock legislature once we arrived down-town at the provincial legislature. In effect what this did was it provided students with the opportunity to debate amongst themselves on student issues. And those in attendance, I think, benefited from it. They became informed as to what the issues are and various arguments on each side. I guess I was Prime Minister which meant I was on the opposition taking all the criticisms. It became very difficult to justify all the concerns of the students. But at least it gives you a perception of both sides of the story. And that's good. So in effect it's really, one, a public display of concerns about student issues and, two, opportunity to discuss these issues. And to inform both ourselves and other students of what the content of the issues is and what kind of hope we can have for progress.

I think we had good media coverage out of it. So on a whole I think it was a success.

Q. It has been suggested that the low turnout of students was not merely a reflection on general apathy on the campus but a pragmatism on the part of students who felt that the Union was organizing the march with no clear objective to be achieved in the end. It is said that the Union failed to articulate the political usefulness of this kind of activity by outlining a definitive plan of action that would follow the march. How do you respond to these assertions?

So I have already indicated that although the Union organized the march, it was CFS NB, it was National Student Day and CFS NB organized it. But the primary people actually doing the work were members of the UNB student council.

I was very disappointed with the turnout-phenomenally disappointed with the turnout from other schools in the province. Moncton sent a few people. Mount A. sent one or two, UNB SJ sent one or two. You know that's not good. It was primarily a UNB/STU activity. There were five or six other universities and colleges in the province that didn't send people down. And that became very frustrating from my perspective, because our organization was spending a lot of time organizing it. And if we are going to do that, let's call it a UNB National Student Day, instead of CFS NB National Student Day. If CFS NB is not going to participate in it wholly. Gary Clarke may disagree with my statements. But my perception as President of the Student Union is that if you get an organization that is not going to contribute, we're not going to contribute. We will do the work ourselves, which we would do anyway and get credit for it correctly.

Some students seemed to have some doubts to the idea of a march. Questions like "What would a march prove?" and "what will happen after the march?" are two common questions.

They are good question. And questions I deal with on a daily basis, because on any project or issue that we bring up everyone asks that question: What's your result? Why bother changing this? People are hesitant to change. As humans we are creature of habit. We love continuity, predictability in our life and society, kind of thing. And you get people in positions that they say, "well, I don't think we can really change that". I think that is a bad attitude to have.

We have to have one, that OK, we have identified an issue or problem before we began our actions we may not have a solution, but by focusing attention on it, we may be able to arrive at a solution. But to

Essay

Reflections on a Tragedy

by Alexandra Fremont

Although more than a month has passed since the massacre of fourteen women at l'Ecole Polytechnique at the Universite de Montreal, the reality of the event, and its implications, are only beginning to sink into the core of many people's consciousness. We must appreciate our need to take the time to grieve for this tragic loss of life, and we must never forget.

The actions of Marc Lepine have been analyzed by quasi-experts, many of whom believe that this is an isolated incident, or that feminism is to blame. I do not subscribe to these schools of thought. I wholeheartedly assert that Lepine's actions were an absolute manifestation of the deep resentment so many men experience towards women in our society.

This tragedy has raised a myriad of unanswered questions; however I maintain that each person must formulate and justify his or her own answers. Nevertheless, one question which has plagued me is why is the oppression of women an acceptable practice in our society?

There are few women who would not agree that the feminist movement has improved their lives. The slogan "We've come a long way, baby" has some merit, although no one seems to understand that as women we prefer not to be infantilized in being called "baby"!

The advancements which have been achieved by and for women are overshadowed by the many oppressive attitudes and behavioral patterns which still exist. I have formulated a list of events which have occurred in the recent past which I consider to be clear examples of oppression against women.

The list is as follows:

- (1) The New Brunswick government will not provide funding for Amana House for the remainder of the 1989/90 fiscal year, the only long-term recovery facility for women's alcohol and drug abuse. No changes were proposed to the existing facility for men.
- (2) In response to the "No Means No" anti-date rape campaign at Queen's University, male students hung signs in their residence which read "No Means Harder", "No Means Kick Her in the Teeth", and "No Means Tie Her Up".
- (3) When women rallied at UNB for the "Take Back the Night" march, stereotypes were systematically turned up and catcalls and jeering could be heard from the men's residences as the speeches began.
- (4) In 1987, 62% of women murdered in Canada died as a result of domestic violence. Prison sentences for wife batterers are ridiculously low, and are usually non-existent, offering no deterrence.
- (5) When interviewed by the New Brunswick Council on the Status of Women, a police officer stated that "assaulted women like being beaten".
- (6) Forty percent of women assaulted by their husbands are beaten for the first time during their first pregnancy.
- (7) Despite an Equal Opportunity hiring policy at Carleton University, the number of women joining the faculty has dropped off in the past three years. Last year only 6 out of 44 positions which were filled went to women.
- (8) Women are continuously asked to leave public locations when they are "caught" breastfeeding their children.
- (9) At UNBSJ, a cartoon which appeared in their student paper displayed 'Frosty the Snow Butcher' holding an axe and standing over a decapitated woman, while the caption read 'Liberated Woman'.
- (10) This year, at Wilfred Laurier University, male students splashed ketchup on women's underwear seized in a panty raid and hung them for display.
- (11) The news of the Montreal massacre of fourteen women was reported on page 8 of *L'Acadie Nouvelle*.
- (12) Fredericton City Council recently voted to cut off funding to Transition House, a shelter for abused women and their children.

The death of a young woman in Nova Scotia this past week as a result of toxic shock syndrome brought an incredible surge of anger. Reports of deaths due to toxic shock syndrome first appeared in the media in the early 1980's. Several deaths were reported in Canada and the United States and a definite link to the use of tampons was recognized as a factor in all cases.

At that time, Michele Landsberg, a well-known columnist with *The Toronto Star*, did some impromptu research. She contacted a representative of a tampon manufacturer to inquire about tampon ingredients. She was told that the information was unavailable and besides, no government standards or regulations were required in the manufacturing of feminine products.

She then called the Health Protection Branch and spoke to Dr Ajit DasGupta who verified the information she had received. He stated "No, we don't test them. Tampons have not caused us any concern until now. We respond to priorities, and they have not been a priority." As a matter of fact, none of the hundreds of intimate products used by women are a priority. Dr DasGupta did volunteer that the condom, used by men, and not inserted into the body, is "a very high priority indeed, especially as it is a protection from disease."

Surely the pattern is detectable here. Do you not remember the horrendous events which followed after women used the Dalkon-Shield intrauterine device, or the drugs thalidomide and DES?

As for toxic shock syndrome, changes have been made that require all manufacturers of tampons to submit ingredient information and test results before new brands are introduced. And why is it that feminine hygiene products are subject to provincial sales tax? Such products are considered a "luxury item" to the Revenue Department, although substitute products remain unavailable.

Many of these examples may not be considered overt oppression by all people. However, these do demonstrate that oppression takes many different forms in many areas of women's lives.

Sexism is rampant in this society, and universities exhibit oppressive behaviors as much as the rest of society. I assert that the Montreal tragedy should never be forgotten and that societal pressure must be exerted in order to overcome the oppression that is a fact of women's lives.

to what's taking place? I know everyone has a busy schedule, but it is my understanding from Gary that they were informed well enough in advance to schedule things in, and, although we did have a letter from the premier, from my perspective the government acknowledgment of National Student Day and the march and what it was intended to do was very poor. . . very, very, poor and I don't think it reflects very well on the government. I guess basically, give a shit as

WORD PROCESSING
 WordPerfect 5.1 using an IBM Microcomputer with LaserJet Printer
 Specializing in letters, résumés, theses, reports, etc. with professional look. Reasonable rates and fast service guaranteed.
JB'S TEMPORARY OFFICE SERVICES
 245 Weimore Road PH. 454-3757