



Managing Editor: James Rowan

So welcome back. Normally in this space, the Managing Editor would run a column extolling the virtues of UNB, congratulating you on your choice of schools, declaring that all was sunshine and light and that all is right with the world, before going on to repeat their welcome again and again to fill the rest of the column. That isn't going to happen here.

You see, I'm not like other Managing Editors. I feel strongly that it is best to smite one's enemies right from day one, to launch a pre-emptive strike against the forces of ineptitude, bureaucracy and stupidity, as it were. As a result, you will not see any mention of how good a school UNB is in this column. I assume you had some rational basis for making the decision to attend, so this couldn't have been the worst school you could go to. After that, I think you should be allowed to make up your own mind. If, after the registration process, you still feel that UNB is the best of all possible worlds, more power to you. You probably have a brilliant career as a petty bureaucrat ahead of you.

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I don't want to complain about registration. I worked at it for the Student Union, collecting names for the Student Directory Project. Everyone I had to deal with as part of my job was extremely helpful, from the CPs all the way up to the Assistant Registrar and everyone in the Registrar's Office. Nevertheless, as part of my job greeting every person and welcoming them to the Aitken Centre, it struck me just how dehumanizing a process Registration really is. My task was to remind them that they have to fill out yet another box on their form, and making them try to remember their new phone number. I had always known that the registration process dehumanizes the students...everyone of us here knows that all too well. What surprised me was how dehumanizing it is for the staff, too. When your only function for four days is to repeat the words "Please check your local telephone number to be sure it is correct," over 2000 times, in my book you are dangerously close to ceasing to be a human being and becoming a mindless automaton. By the end of the weekend, I was completely exhausted and burnt-out—and I didn't even have to work the whole thing. I now understand why some poor sods get their registration so messed up by the people who are supposedly there to help: the minds of those working at registration have stopped functioning by noon of the first day. This doesn't excuse the lack of help that some people encounter trying to fix the errors, or some of the worse snafus that occur, but there are extenuating circumstances.

Registration isn't the only thing that enlivens the first few weeks here at UNB. After you have your courses picked, and before you start changing them again (after having waited in line for 3 or more hours to get into them in the first place), you have to find your classroom. UNB has some pretty amazing places to hide classes. I have one class of twenty people that was scheduled for a room that would barely hold twelve. The professor obviously had to change rooms—and the game of musical chairs had started. Every year I have had at least two classes change position. Two of three weeks into classes, there are normally still students arriving trying to find their displaced first year Calculus course. I'm always amused by how long it takes the students in question to realize that they are actually stuck in a class with three dozen upper-year English students learning about the Poetry and Prose of Antarctica through the eyes of the Spanish Conquistadors in translation (6ch). The look of horror on their poor little faces is always indescribably humorous. My favorite this year was my 10:30 AM MWF class. Apparently, at some point in the past year, Physical Plant (at least, I hope it was Physical Plant) must have ripped out the wall separating the two classrooms Tilley 224A and Tilley 224B. Well, it seems that after they had completed their assigned task, they failed to inform the Registrar's Office that 224A and 224B were now all one room. As a result, 40 or more English students and 10 or so Math students almost had a violent and ugly confrontation over who had the rights to the (now) large classroom in question. Cooler heads prevailed, fortunately. We outnumbered them.

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Unfortunately, at the Orientation Outdoor Concert, cooler heads didn't prevail. With a CP down and out with a beer bottle in the back of the head, and with Uncle Mark chucking people out on their heads left right and centre, it isn't surprising that the concert had to be called off. What I don't understand is why, when people are already taking shots at CPs, it was felt that shutting down the band in mid-set would make people calm down. It didn't work with the Tragically Hip (another great moment in crowd control), and it didn't work especially well here. Nevertheless, a concert isn't worth someone getting hurt...especially a TPOH concert. They weren't very good last time they were here, and I considered the shut-down an act of near-divine mercy. Note for Orientation: When it comes to Moe, just say no.

Unfortunately, other duties are calling me, so I have to leave things here, without having even mentioned: the election, Bob Rae (cuts education a s close as a blade, or your money back!), Kim Campbell's summer job, Audrey McLaughlin—well, I wouldn't have mentioned her anyway—Presto! Manning, Cameron's hard CORE politics, the further adventures of Frank "First New Brunswick and next, the world!" McKenna, my fun summer at the UNB Student Union (four page feature before the end of the year, I promise), Liz Lautard, Conrad Coughlan, team leader and his desk or...well, just keep reading. I promise I'll get around to it.

Quote from the Council Meeting:

"I tried to spend all the money, I really did!"
- James van Raalte, SU President, previous VP-Finance

SPECTRUM

See Sherry Speak
by Sherry A. Marin

Telling it like it is

See Colette. See Colette with her friend Roland. See Roland's girlfriend. See Roland smile. See Roland's girlfriend smile. See Colette frown. See her glassy eyes narrow into fatal slits. See the veins bulge and tremor in raised matrices across her forehead. See Colette scheme. See Roland waving. "Goodbye", says Roland. See Roland's girlfriend leave. See Colette whisper, "Your girlfriend is a..."

Well, boys and girls, in an attempt to preserve whatever innocence you have retained to this point, I could not expose you to the kind of language that was bound to ensue. Do not be under the false impression, however, that we *Brunswickan* writers have the power to shelter you from all harmful words. There are some harmful words from which we cannot shelter you. These take the form of gossip, and all of you have been targeted by it at some point in your lives. If gossip is so harmful, why do people do it? There have been many theories presented. Below are some possibilities.

Perhaps, as our personalities evolve, we learn (through classical conditioning) our own personalized way of dealing with life's problems. We chose the way which we believe works best for us. Some of us become Escapists, people who run from problems. Some of us become analytically-thinking, obsessively responsible Realists. Some of us become Pacifists, or Murderers, or Masochists, and some of us are just plain oblivious to our problems. Those of us who are oblivious usually serve on the Student Union (remember the Daycare Issue?). Other kinds of us fall into the Gossiper category. These pathological gossipers (not idle chatters) use gossip as a sharpened skill, a way of coping with life's problems. They are social manipulators who systematically use verbal weapons as a means of preserving their own interests.

So we see that the Gossiper may fulfill selfish needs by gossiping. First, he/she eliminates people or things which he considers problematic from his life, by simply talking about them until they go away. Second, (and this is an interesting paradox) harmful information dispensed by the gossipper may be used by him to attract friends.

According to *Rumor and Gossip* by Rosnow and Fine, "Gossip collectors may be employed by those too preoccupied or too discreet to gather information themselves." In essence, the gossipper says, "I'll tell you something of interest if you'll talk to me and be my friend for a moment." This is one of the few ways in which the Gossiper is capable of relating to others; obviously the Gossiper has difficulty making friends, because he is seldom trusted by people. Shy people are unfortunately prone to bonding with gossipers because shy people also have difficulty making friends and functioning socially. The shy person thus clings to the gossiping individ-

ual, forming a kind of incubation cord through which he receives information about the world around him. This is an unfortunate but common scenario.

A knack for gossiping not only allows the Gossiper to attract new acquaintances, but also helps to cement the tie to older acquaintances. By persistently accentuating the faults or differences of certain "outsiders" or targets, the gossipper creates the illusion of a greater similarity between himself and his peers (a form of "identification"). We all know this from common-sense; generally, our friends are those whom we perceive as similar to ourselves.

In any situation, the two main catalysts of gossip are anxiety and a lack of information on the thing/person gossiped about. This is a bad sign for new people who come into social situations where there are already gossipers. The newcomer is even more likely to be defamed if he remains silent, stoic or starts to withdraw from the group and withhold information about himself in response to the gossip. If the case of Roland and Colette were factual, and if Roland had known his girlfriend for only a limited period, the new girlfriend probably wouldn't stand a chance.

Some of you may wonder if it's ever o.k. to talk about people. To decide, you might ask yourself, "Why are the events of this person's life so important to my life that I must discuss them?" Another good test is to ask, "Is my interference in this matter helping my friend, or is it only helping me?" If we interfere in other people's rela-

tionships, we require a good reason; perhaps, in Roland's case, there were obvious negative effects on him from his relationship with his girlfriend. If this were true, perhaps Colette would be justified in interfering. However, if she continued to gossip about the girlfriend, perhaps even after the relationship ended, then it could be guessed that her negative talk had been fuelled by ulterior motives. In other words, her actions had been fuelled by ego-needs, perhaps a selfish want to divert all of her friend's attention back to herself.

In some societies, gossiping about another individual, for any reason, is considered a crime. *Rumor and Gossip* reveals that in many "preliterate" societies, there are "supernatural sanctions" for controlling gossip, due to its obviously harmful effects. For example, among the West African Ashanti peoples, "tale-bearing" warrants public punishment. Furthermore, if the target is someone of high status within the tribe, the perpetrator "has his lips cut off or is executed".

A point to remember is that not only the gossipper is guilty when a person's reputation is tarnished. The person influenced by false information is also guilty. Why do people, like Roland in the introduction, allow themselves to be influenced? Festinger, Schacter and Bach used this analogy to explain...Two friends are in a car. The passenger suddenly warns, "This is a dead end." In this situation, if the driver doesn't believe his friend, he can easily test the assertion by driving to the end of the street. However,

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