

# Winter carnival: no spark



For decades the Winter Carnival has been a cherished and exciting event in campuses across North America inspiring the spirits of huge crowds in a week or ten days of zestful partying. The carnival is an event almost everyone gets into...and a lot out of.

Not so at UNB.

This year's carnival was, as Carnival Committee Chairperson Nancy White put it, "a flop."

The failure can be, perhaps, broken down to three not so subtle causes; lousy weather, lousy spirit and lousy management.

More than just the ground was dampened February 2 as the spirits of Carnival organizers trickled off down a side street with the rain. It had been hoped the first day's events would, to use old metaphors, light a spark...they were to start a momentum to carry the carnival through. Not quite half of the carnival events were stopped by slush, and of these most were, said White, "...the ones that were Carny oriented, as opposed to booze."

To light a spark, one needs flint and steel but that flash of

energy will fritter into the atmosphere in an instant if there is no tinder to be lit. This is what happened with Winter Carnival. It seems the students of UNB simply do not want a carnival. Most events were poorly attended, if at all (except, as usual, anything with a lot of booze involved) and even before the bad

weather arrived the number of entries for the parade and snow sculpture contest were surprisingly pitiful.

There is nothing wrong with having a carnival, but could we at least have someone to go to it? The situation seems a bit reminiscent of the art collector who buys a Van Gogh and locks it away in his safe...he doesn't want to enjoy it, he just wants to have it.

The last, and least, of the problems with winter carnival was the organizers. Again the committee felt the cold hand of apathy on its shoulder as volunteers turned out in small numbers. "People don't seem to want to commit themselves," said White. Grumblings from inside the

committee executive shed doubt on the commitment of some members and showed many rank and file committee people had no desire to participate, but were, rather looking for 'resume filler' as a committee member.

The Brunswickan and CHSR-FM both have strong complaints against the committee as information was not offered readily and it was only after steady badgering of the committee that interviews could be arranged. If the committee was acting in part to promote the carnival through the press its accessibility has to undergo a drastic change.

The problem of a dying winter carnival is not, as one might suppose, a universal one. The campuses of Dalhousie and Mount Allison universities both have excellent carnivals packed with events and people.

So it is our problem. And what a problem it is. In the 1979 and 1980 carnivals, the SRC lost a total of \$6,658. This year the SRC got smart and decided to budget for a deficit, thus

avoiding the usual embarrassing questions. If we have reached the point where \$4,000 (the amount budgeted) is put aside for an event that was always intended to break even, the breaking point has been reached.

The spirit at UNB is just not strong enough to support a winter carnival any longer and it is perhaps time for the SRC to look seriously at closing the carnival or at least drastically changing its format. Thousands of dollars will again be lost this year to an event that has apparently lost its importance to much of the campus. The money us is not worth it for those few who really do get something out of carnival.

The last word goes, fittingly to Nancy White, who seems to have been the one person truly devoted to making this year's carnival a success. "I was very

disillusioned...and wouldn't want to see the carnival cancelled, but maybe that is what it needs. If it goes underground for a couple of years maybe someone will eventually bring it back with some true spirit."