

MUGWUMP

by Lynne Wanyeki

I've come to the conclusion that *The Brunswickan's* audience can be divided into several main categories: (1) those who look at the photos and read *Viewpoint & the Personals*; (2) those who flick through and add the letters to *Blood 'n Thunder* to their reading repertoire; (3) those who valiantly plod on through the *Editorial*, the *Opinion* piece, and the *Spectrum* columns; and (4) those who read the entire paper (a commendable breed).

Well, maybe I'm kidding myself with the fourth category - I mean, us staffers don't even bother to read the entire finished product. By the time we're done on Thursday night, we've skimmed through almost every article as we're editing copy, or laying copy down on the flats. In short, our priority becomes getting the paper "out" to the printers, and we're so tired, and stressed-out by this point, that we really wouldn't care if we never saw another paper again.

Anyway ... the point is that anybody who actually reads. *The Brunswickan* fairly comprehensively will notice that a diversity of opinions are expressed within our paper.

Some of our readers will simply wonder why we're so contradictory. Some will accuse us of hypocrisy. Some will put it down to mismanagement and/or oversight on our part.

Which brings up the basic issue: should a student newspaper purely represent the views held by the student population; or should a student newspaper, with the consent of its staff, define and adhere to a political and a social stance? Right now, *The Brunswickan* has a fairly loose policy that prohibits the inclusion of material that promotes discrimination on the basis of sex, race, and sexual orientation. Is this enough? Should we, in fact, actively promote awareness of these and other issues, rather than passively trying to ensure that discriminatory material does not find a forum in our paper? And what of letters to the editor? What of political orientation?

A student newspaper serves another purpose. We welcome students who want to learn how to technically put out a paper. If we adopt a more comprehensive set of policies, will we exclude such students who may feel they do not agree with such policies?

These are issues that are hotly debated every day at *The Brunswickan*. As the content of our paper itself indicates (last week's issue being a good example) there is a real divergence of opinion on many issues among our present staff. Who has the right to draw the line? This is why we welcome, and encourage letters from our readers.

I believe a student newspaper has a lot more freedom than mainstream media in the issues we cover, in the ways in which we choose to cover them, in the inclusion of all marginalized groups of the student population and society at large. We have the freedom to target all segments of society, as opposed to the perceived "majority" segment of society targeted by mainstream media.

With this freedom, like all freedoms comes responsibility. Responsibility to whom? Our readers? Our staff's different, but valid opinions? Or some assumed universal integrity?

Maybe it's a cop-out, maybe it's a compromise - but the best we find ourselves able to do is encourage participation from all students who wish to voice their opinion, without being discriminatory.

Last week, an incident occurred that upset and angered me--the removal of the Iraqi flag from McConnell Hall by students from Aitken House.

The flags which hang in McConnell Hall serve to remind us of the presence of international students here at UNB. They serve to help integrate these students into the university community. They serve to symbolically foster understanding between different cultures.

I realize that a lot of students here have family and friends serving in the Persian Gulf. I realize that polarizing the Allies from the Iraqis ie. "good" from "bad" is a way in which many people understand this war. I realize that defining an enemy helps to relieve the frustrations and anxieties that many people have regarding this war.

The removal of the Iraqi flag caused the Iraqi students to feel alienated from the rest of the university community. They are not responsible for the Gulf War. And the Gulf War will not be solved by targeting Iraqi students here.

I think it is important to remember the countless stories from Japanese Canadians interned unjustly during the Second World War. Actions such as the removal of the Iraqi flag are caused by the same kind of mentality.

"Scapegoating" will not solve the problem. Scapegoating only fosters discrimination. Scapegoating, indeed, creates xenophobia--race hatred.

OPINION

Question: Should the Iraqi flag in McConnell Hall be put back up? Why or why not?



Richard DiGiacinto, BBAI

It should be down because we are at war with Iraq. I don't see any reason why we should put up a flag that symbolizes Iraq. When the war is over then put it back up.



Craig Greer, BAIV

I feel the flag shouldn't go back up because it makes a political statement that we do not agree with what Saddam has done. Nothing against the students (from Iraq) who go here, rather a statement saying that the student body at UNB doesn't support what is happening in the Gulf. It doesn't mean taking a position against students that attend here.



Louise Plourde, BA

I'd leave it down until the war is over.



Dallas Walsh, BSC II

I think if they are going to take that flag down they should take all the flags down until the war is over.



Michael J. Winchar, BAII

Ripping the flag down is somewhat like interning the Japanese in WWII. People are being unfairly condemned on the basis of nationality. The flag should go back up and the Iraqi students it represents given a public apology.



Mike Doherty, BA IV

Not only should the Iraqi flag be removed at McConnell Hall, but all flags should be removed as, my feeling, is nationalism is in fact, a curse. When we can't see beyond our own country and feel only for that one country we sometimes narrow our opinions of other countries.



Greg Moore, EEI

I feel it should be taken down and left down because this is Canada and we are supposed to be supporting our own people and troops over there have gotten enough problems from peace protestors. I feel we should be supporting them and by leaving the flag up is a sign of disrespect towards Canadian people, American people, anyone against the fact that Saddam Hussein is committing these crimes towards other people.



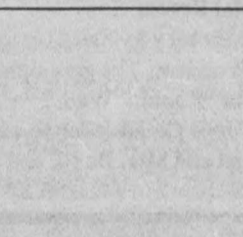
Mark Lockwood, BA V

Once proper public relations are carried out as to why those flags are up at McConnell Hall, I think you can put the flag back up. Because these flags are not there to say we stand for communism or we stand for socialism, they are just there to say that we have an international student body and here are some of the countries that have sent students to UNB.



Michele DeSaulniers, BA III

I wonder if we had students going to school over there (Iraq), if they would leave our flag up. I can see the point that it is not a political statement - we are not fighting with the Iraqi students over here. In a way, the flag should be up for them yet, in another way, I can see how it is disrespectful for our troops over there.



Tony Reiman, BSc III

I think the flag should be put back up because it is more important to respect the students at UNB and the Canadian government because the (Canadian) population is divided to whether we should be there in the first place. And it is disrespectful to the Iraqi people. Saddam should not be representative of the Iraqi people regardless of the fact that he runs the country.