

18 editorial

BY MACK MORGAN

"How much is the President putting in his Rose Garden?"

This is the question the Official Opposition Leader Bernard Valcourt put forth in the Legislature this past week. This is a question this editor, and various other student leaders have been asking for sometime.

More importantly, the question is how much do New Brunswick universities spend in "fertilizer?" When you consider the amount of B.S. abhorrently intrinsic to university expenditures, you as a student, should shamefully plug your nose and get ready your shovel.

If Valcourt's remarks in the Legislature are indicative of the typical MLA, it appears that the provincial government members are unsure of exactly where its money is used, by this great institution of higher learning and others around the province. Advanced Education and Labour Minister Roly MacIntyre was quick to agree with Valcourt that "a review of that area (university accountability) with respect to funding and financing and who is accountable to whom" is necessary.

When the government, acting in our interests is unsure how its doled out funds are used, then that is wrong, if not an indication of bureaucratic ignorance. In order to rectify this, Valcourt suggested the McKenna government require universities to appear before the Legislature's Public Accounts Committee, ideally to be more accountable for their financial dealings.

If universities had to appear before this committee, the intended results, in Valcourt's world, would be, greater efficiency (i.e. handling resources in a better manner), cost conscious(ness) and trimming the lard off the universities' bellies. Today's public education system is an all too convenient target for provincial government cuts. As such, any monies geared towards education must be publicly scrutinised to ensure the universities' school systems, students and the taxpayers are getting their bucks worth.

Would it not stand to reason that shareholders in a company may upon request view that company's financial books. So, why not extend that basic principle to higher education? Trying to get the universities' full account of expenditures is sort of like getting the "Jack" out of a "Jack-in-a-box." Universities like to dictate terms, and public scrutiny takes away their terms. That makes universities sad.

If it is on the university terms, no headway will ever be made. I will put forth a little scenario for you that you are all quite aware of, tuition will undoubtedly go up to offset cuts in education, but will the top dogs of this administration or any other provincial university administration take a cut in pay or benefits? I think not.

Students (and the general taxpayer) have far too long been looked at as sacred cash cows by university administrations. It's time to see where our milk is being spent and if the farmer will start putting less cream in their coffees.

The Magwump Journal

I love advertising. Not all advertising. And definitely not advertising which I've seen so often that I can mime along to it. But I like it all the same. I like the thought behind it. All the analysis into market trends and everything else under the sun to provide a slick packaged product. I like being sold things.

I think that this is the main reason I like MultiTech so much. When you're lost in a sea of choices you can always rely on the lads up there to tell you exactly what you need. And then some. That accessory pack that wasn't catching your eye. Perhaps, your stereo would feel jealous of your stunning new tv and you should replace it with a more complementary product. And then there's that kitchen sink out back. In my year and a half here all I've ever actually bought there was a second hand phone. They were cheap and mine hasn't broken yet. But I just love the way they try and guess exactly what I want and then try and sell me something costing about a hundred bucks more.

In my current position - in charge of the financial well being of this newspaper - of course I love advertising. It keeps this newspaper afloat, lessening the burden on the Student Union (and hence you). This allows us to provide you with a varied and informative newspaper, or a week's supply of toilet paper with classifieds and a couple of cheap laughs.

Of all the advertising campaigns, my favourite is the long running series of print ads for Absolut vodka. How can you not appreciate the thousands of pages they've bought when they've filled them with such cool images. Hell, their advert is usually the best looking page in the magazine.

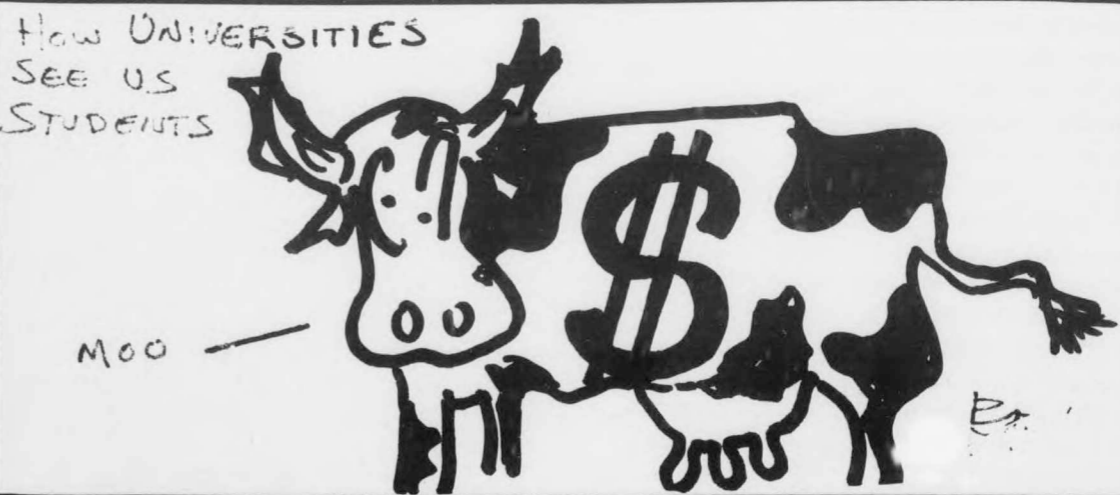
To briefly summarise, all the ads are based around 1 bottle of Absolut and some kind of pun on absolute. They, are at least supposed to say that Absolut is a classy stylish top of the range vodka which classy stylish top of the range people drink (except the top of the range people are really drinking Stolty).

These are the kinds of adverts that make me want to go out and buy the product just as a thank you for creative space filling. So, I went looking for a bottle. It took me a long time to get my hands on one - something to do with minimum drinking age, marketing as an exclusive product, ... but I did eventually get one. The vodka was nice, had the same effect as vodka usually does, and when it was finished I was left with a pristine Absolut bottle. And as I sat back admiring it's refined lines, it occurred to me that the advert had kinda backfired. I had the product I wanted, I didn't really want another. To my unrefined palate, vodka is pretty much vodka - you mix it with something, and suddenly you can't really taste it. But I had my bottle, the single solitary bottle, just like in an ad. You could call it Absolut Neil.

Perhaps I'm just a statistical anomaly, some freak who enjoys images, and the ads were never really meant for me. After all, they're still running, so someone must be buying more than one bottle.

Neil Daxbury

Blood n' Thunder



Let's blame capitalism for everything

Dear Editor

It is disturbing to read 'The Left Job' column every week and to find that all of our society's ills are due to vile and evil capitalism. I never knew that I was so bad off living in this capitalist society. I must thank the writer of this column for bringing these important facts to my attention. For one, I had no idea that capitalism causes unemployment. I just thought it was the fact that there are too many people and not enough jobs. It never would have occurred to me that capitalism causes racism. You speak of the 'good old days' before the capitalist world economy took shape: the ancient times where there was no capitalism or racism ... just slavery and religious persecution. I hardly think that capitalism is the root of today's racism. Racism is just one of the many forms of discrimination and prejudice, as well as slavery and religious persecution. Discrimination has always existed, as you so aptly pointed out, it just evolves and changes with society.

I don't think that a socialist government could put an end to racism and all the other evils of society. As a matter of fact, I don't think any type of government can. Myself, I kind of like being a capitalist. I don't think I'd like it very much if a socialist government tried to take care of me. They have enough trouble taking care of us now. I also enjoy the freedom that I can do whatever I like with my life instead of being set in a predetermined societal mold where I have to work to support the weak and the poor. I like the fact that if you work hard and try to get ahead, it usually works. The hardest worker is the man who works for himself.

I'm not sure if I am arguing the right points here. For all I know, you could agree with half of what I said. Your column simply states that capitalism is to blame for our corrupt society...you never actually say how socialism would fix it.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Beaudoin

Oppose Gov't fear tactics but don't break windows

To the Editor

As some people may have heard on the news, there was a demonstration at the Ontario Legislature on February 7. This demonstration was part of a Canadian wide day of action called by the Canadian Federation of Students to oppose cuts to post secondary education. During the demonstration a large number of the demonstrators tried to enter the legislature building. In the attempt by the police to stop this from happening some windows were broken and some other damage was done to the building.

As a result of this legitimate expression of anger at the attacks that all levels of government are launching against social programs, four people were arrested. They have been charged with insulting the

legislature (yes I said insulting), or some foolishness like that. This is a law that has never been used before, although there have been real attacks on legislative buildings before without this charge being laid. If convicted these four people could face up to 15 years in prison (for breaking a window).

We must ask ourselves why this archaic and draconian law has been invoked at this time. Some people, including our self-proclaimed (and in some cases appointed) student leaders, will tell you that this charge fits the crime. This is absolutely wrong. These charges have been laid in an attempt to create an atmosphere of fear, so that people will be afraid to demonstrate when the governments decide to attack the services that people need and deserve in the future.

These sorts of attacks on peoples rights by government must be actively opposed. As a start on this campus, I, as Arts Rep in the Student Union, will be putting forward a motion to council calling for the Student Union to demand that the charges against these four people be dropped. Another possible action that people could take is to start a petition campaign for the charges to be dropped.

Whatever people do, it is imperative that it be remembered that these people are not criminals, they are innocent victims of a system that does not care about people.

Chris Rogers
International Socialists
Fredericton Branch

You want "rubbish", I'll give you "rubbish" and the facts

To the Editor

I am writing in response to the Blood n' Thunder letter sent last week by two students who were unhappy with the comments I had made in the article "SU Health Plan Usage Report in Question". I understand the frustration that some students felt this year with the opt-out procedure for the 1995-96 Health Plan, and Jennifer Mallory and Jason Comeau seem to be two of them. However the rubbish that they spoke of in last week's "Blood and Thunder" is not only misguided, but begs the question - how thoroughly did you read the Feb. 2nd article before you decided to air your own problems with the opt-outs? I was writing about the REIMBURSEMENT and/or CLAIMS procedure, which is something completely different i.e.: not opting-out. This inattention to detail is the reason that students who failed to take the YELLOW copy of their opt out form to the business office did not receive a credit of \$95.00 to their account. It is relatively the same as picking up your student loan form at the business office and then failing to take it to the bank - then complaining about not getting your money! We are all adults here and it is ultimately your responsibility to take care of your financial affairs. As far as the two students in question speaking to me about the opt out problems, our offices have no record of your having called. We are working with the business office to make the opt-out system better for all students, but these

things don't happen over night.

With Best Regards,
Tricia Davidson
V.P. Student Services

Former SU Prez upset with current SU dealings

Dear Editor

All year, through one financial disgrace after another I have been silent. My hope has been that the checks and balances that have been established over the years would ensure that the integrity of the Union would remain in tact. I was wrong.

Throughout this year the most important check and balance, the Council, has consistently failed to do their job. They have turned a blind eye to improper reporting of spending as well as improper and unauthorized spending. For instance, the fabled credit cards were acquired without council assent, which contradicts the Financial Policy which governs the Union. Numerous conferences have been attended without prior Council approval, another violation of the Financial Policy and the Executive unilaterally extended the work terms of the summer employees (themselves included) without first seeking approval from Council, presumably at the annual summer council meeting. [Editor's note: only the Executives had their summer work term extended - other summer employees did not] While I do not support the actions of the Executive, and in fact find them disgraceful and self-serving, I cannot understand why Council routinely gives the OK to such acts. Often times the Executive is forced to be more accountable with *The Brunswickan* rather than Council. This is not right.

Recently a series of actions taken by the UNBSU VP Student Services, Ms. Tricia Davidson has pushed me to break my silence. It was reported last week that the *Consumer's Guide* has all but been terminated by the Council. Anyone who thinks that this massive project can be put on-line as easily as it has been portrayed to Council is helplessly naive.

I applaud the idea of developing an interactive version of *The Guide* and I support the notion that it will reduce cost. I cannot, however, understand how \$800 can be seen as reasonable compensation for the job, especially when the person proposing this new project can turn around in the same meeting, cite personal financial hardship, and receive an additional \$1,000 to do something that is already in her portfolio.

Over the weekend I did a little math so that I could get my head around this concept. Somehow in the eight weeks remaining between now and the last council meeting Ms. Davidson has to put in 270 hours. (I assume this must be done by the last council meeting as her recommendations and results will have to be received and debated by Council before going into effect. That is barring another unilateral decision of the Executive.) In short, 270 hours in eight weeks amounts to roughly 30 hours a week at a wage of less than \$4 per hour. Ms. Davidson said that she would have to take on a part time job this term to make

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