

BLOOD AND THUNDER

Letters to the editor reflect the views of our readers and not necessarily those of the Brunswickan. Letters may be sent to Rm. 35 in the Student Union Building. Deadline: 1 pm on Tuesday. Usual maximum length: 300 words. Please include name, student number and phone number

A dictatorship?

Dear Editor,

After two years stay in the residence system at UNB I have seriously come to wonder what motivates the Residence Administration.

Let me first say that while in residence I fully enjoyed and benefitted from the memory and friend-filled experience of residence life. I would do it all over again if I could. I feel however, the rewarding experience I had, was deteriorated rather than supported by the Residence Office.

During the summer, I took the time to write down a few of my comments and concerns about the quality of student life on campus. In the form of a letter, I briefly outlined these thoughts and sent it to the Dean of Residence, Mary Lou Stirling. In my letter, I requested a response and even suggested a possible meeting to discuss our concerns and views of residence life together. That was five months ago and to date I have yet to receive any response whatsoever.

Am I to assume, that because I have not yet received a response, that the administration does not care about students' opinion of residence life? If this is true, how can the "government" of the residence community be defined? A Democracy? I think not. In a Democracy, are not all individuals in the community entitled to an equal say in how things are run? And what about the election of leaders, did students vote the Dean of Residence into power? If so, was it for an indefinite term?

A dictatorship is defined as ruling with absolute power. Can we define our residence community at UNB this way? The Residence Office, overseen by one individual (a dictator), seems to fail to recognize the views of its concerned residents. Could it be that the only real concern the administration has is with itself?

This letter is a plea to Mary Lou Stirling. I sincerely urge you, Mary Lou, to listen to what students have to say and reach out to them to find what they are concerned about.

"WE PAY TO STAY, GIVE US A SAY!"

I am still patiently waiting to hear from the Residence Administration as well as other student's views.

Concerned,
Derrick MacLeod & other concerned students

Vindictive and harassing

Dear Editor:

These days *The Brunswickan* seems to excel in accusations, apologies, counter-accusations and self-denials of all kinds. These misleading rhetorics, often based on emotion rather than reason, could only undermine the credibility of its writers and the newspaper in general.

Some of the articles which appeared recently in *The Brunswickan*, seemed really vindictive and harassing, others were pure dramatization of the facts; these cannot serve any cause; at best they may only create confusion and distortion in people's mind. It may be time for *The Brunswickan* to teach its volunteer staff-writers a little bit of "professionalism": Self interest should not overtake on their objectivity. Also they should have some respect for the readers [do not (even try to) manipulate their judgment]; just give the facts and let the reader make up her/his own mind.

In conclusion, those with radical views on complex issues, should try to

analyze their implications, bearing in mind that "no one is perfect: and "an eye for an eye will make the whole world blind".

Sincerely,
Ibrahim Karidio

Response lacks maturity and dignity

Dear Editor,

The following is an open letter addressed to the U.N.B. Undergraduate Biology Society:

It is my usual nature to observe the workings of the Biology Society without comment. Now, I feel I must join the ghosts of executives past that haunt the aftermath of this year's Halloween party. As a past president of the society I have read with interest the letters published in the Brunswickan in the last two weeks. It is commendable that the current executive undertook the effort to write a response to the letters of Ingraham and Schousboe. In this you showed a responsibility to your membership and yourselves. It is unfortunate that this response lacked both the maturity and level of dignity that an executive should maintain.

As you are now aware of the intent of my letter, you will instantly seize upon the fact that I was not present at this event or any other event the society has organized this year. What you must realize is that it is naive to think that the only people who can and will judge the activities of the society are those who are members and who attend more than one event. Members of the faculty, students (even non-members!), and those with no ties to your organization at all will evaluate you and the society both by your actions directly, and by what they hear of it, reliable or not.

What I have heard is that the offer to cleanup the camp was made, and was refused by the person responsible for the camp. If you are familiar with this person at all, you would know how polite and forgiving they are. You would also know that they would refuse the offer, out of their own politeness. There comes a point where respecting what someone says out of courtesy turns into taking advantage of that individual (we must not confuse legal responsibility with moral responsibility). This person does not want any further involvement with the issue, and had wanted to remain anonymous - did you have the decency to check with them before printing their name? The least you could have done was send a thank you to the person who donated the camp for your use, and it is always a nice touch to include a similar note in the personals of the Brunswickan. At the least it's some free advertising.

You also misquoted and misrepresented one of Ingraham's phrases. In it she stated "Please don't destroy several years of hard work in just a few months and a few bad parties". In this she was referring to the future potential of bad parties (and subsequent bad press) to have a negative impact on the functioning of the society. She was not referring to previous events of this year. It is not only the impact on membership and the views of the student body, but let us not forget the financial gods up the hill that keep the society in the black (hopefully). There is more on the line here than your own personal reputations. While you are so busy scurrying to protect them, why not show the decency of signing your names to your letters, instead of hiding behind the "Executive" banner.

By attempting to defend the disruptive behavior of your peers you have shown that you are no better your-

selves. An executive is there to, at times such as these, maintain control of a situation and take a leadership role. Yet you were "surprised how hard" they (Danielle and Mary), "came down on the Biology Society regarding supervision...". Are you denying your "responsibility for what takes place"??? As an executive, you are responsible.

I also fail to see the relevance of the fact that three of four executive members were intoxicated at last year's whale watch. How does this relate to the issue at hand? It is to further lower the level at which this mud-slinging is to continue? The fact remains that one member was not, the party did not get out of control, no damage occurred, and no letters to the Brunswickan appeared either. If this is the extent of the dirt you could manage to find on them, then I give my congratulations to the past executive for a job exceptionally well done! Perhaps you should reverse the sequence of your current 'evolutionary' logo, and replace "Rising above the rest..." with "Stooping to Conquer...". It seems much more appropriate.

Sincerely,
Tim Williams
President, 1990-1991
UNB Biology Society
(Undergraduate)

Making a difference

Dear Editor:

One day, as I was contemplating life, I thought to myself "Everyone has a drum to beat." This week I would like to beat mine in your column. Please allow me to begin.

This past Friday night at the Aitken Center, I witnessed a very disappointing campus event. The event I speak of was the Black Canadian Congress' SOMALIA Relief Initiative concert. The reason of this disappointment, you ask? What could have been an excellent concert, and more importantly, a tremendous success towards providing relief for the Somalian people, turned out to be one of the most poorly attended Entertainment happenings so far this year, and possibly ever. While I realize there may be a variety of explanations for this, I believe there are none which may sufficiently function as excuses.

I talked to some who had attended afterwards, as well as a few people who had not, concerning the possible reasons for the poor turnout. I heard comments like this: "It wasn't well advertised," or "I hadn't heard about it." "Fredericton isn't big enough for a concert like this," was another. Granted, I agree this concert could have been much more effectively promoted. Personally, however, I saw dozens of posters advertising the event throughout the preceding week(s). In addition, there was a half-page advertisement on the back of the November 20th issue of the Brunswickan. (It is common knowledge that the entire campus religiously reads the *Brunswickan* to cover each week). No, I have a hard time buying the "poor advertising theory" - at least as the sole explanation. Poor advertising, I believe, was not the real reason for the flop of the relief concert initiative.

At this point I will make a bold statement: our generation is very good at talking about great ideals, but very weak at striving to achieve them. I hear talk of concern for our world, and building a better environment, and the world becoming a "global community". I hear talk about wanting to make a difference. I hear people frustrated with politics, and with not being able to make a difference. And yet sometimes, I sense that this talk is just talk, and not all that meaningful. While I do not doubt for a second that there would be a large proportion of students who would agree that something should be done to help the people of Somalia, it appears as though concerns of this nature are just not important enough to us. Or else they are not real enough.

This forces me to ask if it is possible for situations like the one in Somalia to become real for our generation? Can we be moved, at least inwardly, to feel some compassion for these people? These are questions I am struggling to come to terms with? Right

now, I see only a veneer of concern on the part of our generation for the plight of humanity. For if we cannot even be moved to pay \$10 for a cause such as the relief concert, while at the same time being entertained, what implication does this hold for the idealism of our generation?

Still others will feel that there is nothing that can or should be done, or that we have no obligation whatsoever to come to the aid of those who are hurting and in need. Ironically, such individuals, because they act primarily, and often only out of self-interest, would be the first to appeal to the rest of the world for help, were they to be the victims of starvation and war, or (to think the unthinkable), unemployment.

As for the suggestion by one that "Fredericton is not big enough" for a concert like this. I am amazed at the thought that the people from all of the bars in Fredericton could have packed out the Aitken Center last Friday night. And not only that, but people could have had an excellent time together with their own friends, or met new ones, appreciated the blending of cultures, and contributed to an outstanding cause in a very effective way.

I am constantly hearing people say "what can possibly be done to make a difference?" And, "If I give, how am I to know where my money is going, or that it will even get through?" This too, I believe, is not a sufficient reason for not acting. Such a statement is only a means of self-protection.

Having said what I have, I want to make it clear that it is not my aim to speak condemnation on our generation, but to issue a warning against apathy and self-indulgence. And, having said what I have, I will be the first to admit that I grasp only in small way, what it must be like for the people of Somalia to have to struggle to survive. But I also want to try.

Sometimes I can see how those who, with age and through wisdom speak of the idealism of youth, also often speak of the foolishness of youth. I find the self-indulgence of our generation far too disturbing. Events such as last Friday's SOMALIA Relief Initiative are our opportunities to "make a difference". Such opportunities do not often show themselves. If one does appear again, however, may we have the strength, wisdom and foresight to recognize, and then seize it.

And the beat goes on...
Scott A. McCready

Don't need the hassle

Dear Editor,

Last Wednesday at around 1:00 A.M. (Wednesday, morning, Nov. 18, 1992) I was subjected to the scariest event of my life. I was at the "Cosmo" having a good time and all that kind of fun with my friends. We never touched nor insulted anyone at all during the course of the evening and no one had any reason to pursue the sort of indignant action that ensued.

First, I am gay. Homosexual, fag, whatever you call me, I don't care. I'm not your typical gay man - I'm just the average "Joe". I don't need the hassle of the ignorant "redneck" who has the gall to tell me that I have no right to exist and that my life is a blasphemy to the name of God.

Everything had been going fine until I was leaving. A friend of mine was going with me. I went outside and waited until he had his coat. The perpetrators came out between us; probably a little inebriated. The four of them were moving in the opposite direction when one turns around and asks the two of us if we were gay.

What followed was a lot of talk about how they hate fags, how homosexuality is not natural, and so on. I never said a word. They concentrated on my friend who they said had been dancing like a queer. I was quiet because I knew nothing I could say would help the situation. I was terrified.

My friend did all the talking but what he said disturbs me. I'm not calling him a coward for any gay person in this predicament is ready to leap right back "into the closet" and deny any homosexual feeling whatsoever. It's scary because he immediately denied everything and I'm sure I would have as well. It's just frightening that we have gained so little ground and so little respect in society that we have to be afraid of this sort of thing. Does society hate us that much? Should we be so scared, that we have problems admitting it even to ourselves?

After all the talking, the guy who was right next to me, hit me in the right eye. I

never even got a look at him because he would have thought I was going to make a run for it and hit me even sooner. So anyways, he hit me once but he wasn't a very good hitter because it doesn't even hurt at all now and it's only slightly discolored. If he had been alone... (Despite being a fag, I am not a pansy). Since we were a tad outnumbered, I ran as soon as he hit me (figuring he'd be a little off balance). I don't think they even chased me (I was concentrating on what was ahead). I heard my friend scream once as I was running through the cemetery downtown and I made my way to a friend's house to call the police. Someone had already called them and an ambulance was on its way (I'd like to thank the Commissioner at Carleton Place downtown for that). I was really frightened because while I was there one of the "military boys" (I recently found out that they are from Gagetown) asked another if he had "the knife" and the other guy looked a little caught off-guard. It was obviously a scare tactic but you never can tell.

Next thing I know I'm at the hospital. From 2 until 7 I am there watching my friend get stitched up. Thank God he wasn't as damaged as I thought he would be. He was soaked in blood when I got there. They had kicked him a lot (they had said that they didn't want to use their hands for fear of infecting themselves with H.I.V.) He suffered sufficient blood loss and laceration that needed a few stitches. Most of the action occurred around his head. He had said he had curled up in a ball to protect his head. Imagine the trauma he could have sustained if he hadn't done that.

What really angers me about this is that these ignorami probably thought they could get away with it. The old mentality that we are just ridding the world of two genetic dead ends always comes to mind. Four grown men beating up two (one) gay men really shows us a lot. Perhaps they were a little drunk and needed someone to vent their rage on. Perhaps they have their own sexual insecurities with which they are dealing, some what badly. Perhaps they just fear what they don't understand. I'm sure that if they are reading this (or anyone who subscribes to this particular mentality), then they probably view me as a stupid little fruit who stagnates the gene pool and doesn't have the sense "that God gave him". "If he did have any sense, he'd be straight." Boys, I apologize only for the shortcomings I can control not the ones that I didn't choose (Yes, surprise, I didn't choose this lifestyle.)

Thank you, guys, for showing me what a sick and twisted thing mankind is towards what it doesn't comprehend. Thank you for supplying me with grief and pain which I have had a desperate shortage of in the last few months. I can only hope that you will get some in return soon (vindictive little imp, aren't I?) The cops did arrest the poor excuses for mature men by the way. Two witnesses and a living witness, as well as blood on their clothes; they must have been going for the perfect crime. And don't expect me not to remember you, guys, because the only alcohol I had was one drink three hours before the incident. I don't know how this will affect you. Chances are that you will be bitter old men still hating homosexuals, and that's sad! But rest assured, something will happen. Because none of us are afraid to speak out on this. Perhaps you should be afraid for yourselves; you certainly gave us reason to fear. For that, I have my own prejudice against you despite the fact that I don't know you. And all I need to know is that you hate me without knowing me. And you cannot say that the stereotype that you have in your mind is by any stretch of the imagination, a correct assessment of who I am. So don't hide behind the mask that we are all alike, that we all belong on a little island in the middle of the ocean, just waiting to be bombed.

I can see their defense now - "they tried to pick us up at the club and they harassed us and we were scared." Probably this is the version of the Daily Gleaner. None of this, by the way, is true. We know enough not to go looking for trouble. We're gay, not stupid.

Thank you for letting me know that those that aren't persecuted for some trait of minority don't really understand that difference is acceptable and conformity doesn't always breed perfection. Thank you for giving the two of us something to remember you by for the rest of our lives. And thank you for showing me in all my blissful ignorance, that we all still have a long way to go.

"Leonardo"
Name withheld by request.