

# The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication

Editor-in-chief.....Stephane Comeau  
 Managing Editor.....Kim Doyle  
 Assist. Managing Editor.....Melanie R. Hawkes  
 Co-News Editor.....Nujma Yaqzan  
 Co-News Editor.....Julie Hirschfeld  
 Sports Editor.....Eric Drummie  
 Assistant Sports Editor.....Patrick McCarthy  
 Entertainment Editor.....Steve Griffiths  
 Features Editor.....Kwame Dawes  
 Offset Editor.....James Taylor  
 Distractions/Lit. Editor.....Darlene Hannah  
 Photo Editor.....Jayde Mockler  
 Advertising Manager.....Alan Robichaud  
 Business Manager.....Kathy Makela  
 Graphic Artist.....Peter Bailey

## STAFF THIS ISSUE

Stephanie London, Alan Carter, Stephanie Collier, Dave Nelligan, Stephen Seabrook, Sean Maloney, John Stillwell, L.M. Hughes, John Hanscomb, Peter Ferguson, Jeremy Earl, Mark Savoie, Kelly Craig, Jennifer Duncan, Sharky.

### Typesetters extraordinaire:

Tina Bakari, Chris Daley, Denise Holloway, Cindy Fitzherbert.

The Brunswickan, in its 123rd year of publication, is Canada's oldest official student publication. The Brunswickan's offices are located in Rm 35 of the University of New Brunswick's Student Union Building, P.O. Box 4400, College Hill, Fredericton N.B., E3B 5A3. Tel. 453-4983.

The Brunswickan is published by Brunswickan Publishing Inc. and printed with flair by Henley Printing Ltd., Woodstock, N.B.

Subscription is \$25 per year. Second class mail pending.

Local Advertising rates are available from The Brunswickan, (506) 453-4983. National advertising rates are available from Youthstream Canada Ltd., 1541 Avenue Road, Suite 203, Toronto, Ont. M5M 3X4, Tel: (416) 787-4911.

Articles printed in The Brunswickan may be freely reproduced provided proper credit is given.



# EDITORIAL

Should scientists be stopped from conducting investigations whose findings society may not want to know about? Psychologist Philippe Rushton, a University of Western Ontario professor, has come under intense fire recently for his theory that intelligence and behavior are linked to race, and the criticism has not just come from the scientific community either. Ethnic groups, the university's student council and even the premier of Ontario got in on condemning the researcher. Criticism from the Scientific community came from well known geneticist David Suzuki, amongst others, who called Rushton's study "dangerous and a lousy scientific venture".

No one is going to argue that criticism of another's theory on scientific grounds is always valid. The most difficult and telling test of anyone's ideas is having them challenged by a peer who is equally familiar with the subject matter. But Rushton is facing something else as well: his conclusions are not popular because they could lend themselves well to racist arguments (i.e. biased hiring policies, admission to schools, etc...). Obviously not conclusions that would be helpful to the current state of affairs in places like South Africa, or even in North America. It is quite hard to envisage any good coming from Rushton's conclusions directly. Not surprisingly many ethnic groups are enraged. So here lies the question, should studies whose conclusions may offend society be suppressed? Should the government interfere in what universities investigate?

The findings of scientific researchers aren't always going to be popular with society nor have they been in the past. Galileo and Copernicus were condemned by the church because their findings conflicted with church beliefs, and with most of society's at the time. But they were right in the end. Whether or not Rushton comes out right or wrong remains to be seen (media gives out so little of the substance behind his conclusions that it is difficult to consider), but I do not think that it is society's place to condemn a scientist for coming to conclusions that we do not like to hear. But one can be certain that any controversial theory like Rushton's will be challenged in a serious manner by other scientists, and hopefully disproved (things would be much easier that way).

With the incredible advances in science that we are currently experiencing, especially in the area of genetics and gene functions, we are likely going to be presented with many findings in the relatively near future that challenge our beliefs on how and why we think and behave the way we do. Many of these ideas will likely be unpleasant to some, but so is the concept of censoring these ideas in the first place. Society should not attempt to restrict the areas of knowledge that scientists are investigating, but instead strive to control the application of such knowledge. The situation with regards to genetic engineering applications on humans is a case in point; gene therapy is only done on humans when the changes cannot be passed on to offspring.

The most important thing is to not forget our humanity when putting the knowledge we gain to use. The knowledge of the results of the Nazi policies on Eugenics, the breeding of a superior race, and their horrible consequences should serve to remind us not to lose sight of what we are doing with our scientific knowledge, regardless of what we may learn.

Stephane Comeau

