

# EDITORIAL

## The Freeness Mentality

A few weeks ago, I broadcast my CHSR radio programme live from St Thomas University's cafeteria in an attempt to bolster the involvement of students in the station. Normally, such activities are regarded as begging activities in which the club or organization tries to justify its existence by increasing its enrollment of members. However, I approached the event with a far different perspective.

Lately, I have become increasingly aware of the significant avenues for personal development that exist on this campus and it is now my opinion that when CHSR opens its doors to students (as it should) it is providing an important service to the student community, a service that will be of immeasurable value to those who take advantage of the service. At this live broadcast, I met a couple who laughed as they said that their son had been involved with the station for a year. He had his own programme which was named by the father, a soft-spoken unassuming individual. The show, The Bionic Turnip Show was one I remembered because of the crazy cart that had been designed for it. The enthusiasm of the parents convinced me that they understood that the station had been a wonderful outlet for the son. But it gets better. Apparently, this young man was now enrolled in a communications programme at Concordia university and doing exceptionally well. He was doing something he enjoyed doing at last. CHSR should take some credit for this. It gave the man a chance to explore hands on this thing of radio broadcast in a forum that allowed people to make mistakes and be trained. The mother beamed as she mumbled something about having always wanted to work on radio. The station manager Jeff who was standing at the booth let her know that there was nothing stopping her from getting involved even as a member of the community. She couldn't believe it at first. Eventually she took details about the station and made some crucial contacts and plans.

There is something wonderful about this story in that it epitomizes what the station is and should be about. Students have full access to the excellent equipment in the station and get a chance to explore their creativity. They pay nothing for the training they get, except for the student fee paid each year, and they have access to the large record library of the station. The station is run on hard work, precision and enjoyment, and the combination of these three elements should characterize the life of a university student.

Surely people take for granted the possibilities that are involved here and this is a sad thing to observe. I would never describe my country as a depressed or deprived nation, but I am certain that I would never, as a university student have the kind of access to radio broadcasting that is available here at UNB. The fact is that in larger centres, the same is true. While students may be said to have access to facilities, the demand is so great that certain criteria must come into play. UNB is fortunate to have no such problems and students should not take these things for granted.

The same must be said for the Brunswickan which is a student publication that is run by students. Surely, the training that one may receive through working here is so varied that it can challenge the most literary and the most technical of our students. Above all, the pressure of consistent performance and excellence is something that a good deal of students could benefit from. Resumes look good with stuff like this on it, and the skills learnt are genuine. I have harped on this issue for a long time and I will continue to do so simply because I have learnt never to take the development of marketable skills (free of cost) for granted.

Fredericton's list of things that people could be involved in which grant professional training is impressive, and students should be aware of them. The television field is available to students in the form of Cable 10 television which is set up by law to provide training for any individual in the community and to give them a chance to practice the skills they learn. The Fredericton Film Makers Co-op is a genuine film making unit with equipment and skilled people. One can learn the skills of film making and be involved in several projects that challenge skills and technical know how. There are other volunteer centres like Chimo, the Rape Crisis Centre, transition House, and UNB's Counselling Services where varying levels of counselling skills are taught and practiced. The list is obviously much longer than this and it is hard to exhaust, but the point is that with so much available for students, the education process can become a far more wholistic one that meets the multiple needs of the individual.

At home in Jamaica we went through a period during which it was fashionable to take advantage of free things. We dubbed the mindset that evolved from this 70s socialist era as the Freeness Mentality. It was a useful skill to develop because it ensured that one kept an ear and eye out for anything that could be especially useful to one's welfare at no immense cost. Perhaps, my apprenticeship as a high school student in those days who was beginning to understand what education as a right and not a luxury meant prepared me to take advantage of the facilities that I have found in this city. Of course, the beauty of it all is that, through my involvement in many of these organizations, I have been able to contribute significantly to the community. So maybe it is not all freeness after all!

by Kwame Dawes

# The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication

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