

## EDITORIAL

The UNB student union has managed, in the true spirit of Canadian politics, to deliver a budget report which shows that their office expenses will be over budget more than sixty-five thousand dollars by the end of the academic year. Additionally, in true political fashion, the SU's timing for releasing the report could not be more fortuitous for those of the bubble gum set who are choosing to re-offer for SU positions for next year. The election week was more than half over before the report was released to council, detailing the state of the SU's finances.

Apparently the council has been rubber-stamping budget overages for the SU and none of the councillors bothered to do the math and question the amounts. Reform... Cut and Slash... Don't ask for more money... they screech at us, as we struggle to stay current in our technology, and they spend like the Canadian Airborne Regiment in town for the weekend. Office over-expenditures on the bottom line total \$52, 298 to date.

Some of these over expenditures include:

Insurance \$14, 826  
Salaries \$10, 707  
Wage subsidies for summer jobs \$7, 977  
Computers \$14, 147  
General Office supplies and equipment \$10, 376  
this includes: Computer \$2, 200  
Dividers \$1, 300  
Furniture \$1, 500  
SU hats \$500  
Other items including an auditors adjustment

total \$4, 876.

\$8, 000 more is expected to be spent on the office budget and council activities up to the end of April.

While some of the overages are legitimate expenses such as the insurance and wage subsidies others seem way out of line. Buying \$14, 000 worth of computers for the desks of VP's and dividers for making those all-important closed door meetings even more private, seem to be a bit much.

By the end of the year, the VP Finance Luc Pinet predicts that the budget shortfall will be in the neighbourhood of \$25, 000 with the rest being made up from under-expenditures or revenues from other areas of the budget. Actually, all other items of the budget came in either on target or under budget.

The VP Finance stated at the end of his presentation that "Council will have to be more accountable and financially responsible next year". But if they are planning on being more responsible next year, I don't see it being demonstrated in their budget. The SU intends to increase their own operating funds by \$23, 000 next year. This is the largest increase in any one area of the budget. In order to do so, they may increase student fees to \$105, contingent upon UNB's not pulling out of CFS.

With a financial track record like this, one is left wondering where the voice of responsibility has been this year. While council is responsible for authorizing the over-expenditures, why have the VP Finance and the UNB Foundation for Students been silent all term about this financial SNAFU? It is their job to be the financial watchdogs of the SU. If they are going to claim that they are financially responsible then someone must accept responsibility for this mess. Saying, "Oh well, we'll try to do better next time" isn't good enough.



We'll it seems some people can't keep their budgets in their pants while others are responsible enough to engage in safer activities.

For instance, where's University President Armstrong? I hear he's taking a richly deserved vacation after meeting with some alumni on the Pacific rim. I assume while he was there, he was pumping hands for UNB relations and soliciting a few contributions for The Venture Campaign. Maybe he took a few of those window decals we all received as incentive.

By the time you read this the ballots for the Student Union elections will have been diligently numerated by the Chief Returning Officer and his deputies. Congratulations to the winners and everyone else that took the time to run. I hope there aren't any sour grapes over the outcomes because Morgan's rule 41 says "Winnin' don't mean a hill of beans if you ain't got the majority of people behind you"

Voter turnout over the last two years has been considerably under 30% so that means no less than 70% of approximately 7000 students didn't vote. So approx. 4900 of you took the time to not vote. Kudos for you. Silent protest always works the best. Just ask a mime.

It doesn't take a space cadet to know that water seeks its own level or that gravity causes things to fall. Well with all the wet weather we've had lately it has become increasingly hazardous to be a pedestrian in our fine fair city, especially if you're hydrophobic. There is enough water downtown to float Woodside and the boys right out into the mighty, mighty St. John River. The other day for instance, I and my trusty sidekick, Spindleyboy, Jon were stuck at the corner of Northumberland and Dundonald. Actually we weren't stuck, we were just on our way to Tingley's for some chow. Coincidentally so was *The Brunswickan's* own beloved Editor in Chief. Slightly out of character, the Chief looked as though he had started the motions of a wave. His hand was barely arched in an upright position and Vrooom (ok,ok, it was a lame impression of car passing by), and some little Hyundai splashed him royally. It appeared as though he had volunteered to be one of the rags on the Bounty commercials. I guess he isn't gonna wave anymore.

Speaking of taking a bath, didn't I hear a couple more universities pulled out of the Canadian Federation of Students. Talk about premature withdrawal. I don't even know if we've pulled out yet.

# Blood n' Thunder

## Opinion: Reclaiming Africa's Image

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the Brunswickan or its staff.

by Eugene Omboli

The key to the success of African nations resides, in my opinion, in Africa's ability to face change, adapt to it and prevail. For this to happen, a process must be set in motion to develop new agendas, new strategies and new plans; adapting African countries to the ongoing process of global transformation. This demands a new breed of African leader capable of challenging conventional wisdom, of suggesting fresh ideas and of developing new approaches.

They have to transform themselves into winners and promoters of problem-solving and working African countries. They need to brace themselves to aggressively address societal issues and pursue cooperative reciprocal obligations through calculated risks in experimentation and innovation. Such leaders should be mindful of the serious constraints of the crisis we face and be prepared to devise appropriate responses tailored to identified needs and targets.

It is well-known that in addition to the part of Africa presented to the world publicly by foreign media, there is a more complex Africa that is hidden from readers, viewers and listeners all over the world for different reasons.

For example, news about Africa constituted about 10% of the total of broadcast time of network evening news coverage in 1986 in the USA. Of that number, stories about black Africans made up only 1% of the news time after the subtraction of news from South Africa, Libya and the rest of countries from the Maghreb. Of the few reports on black Africa that are carried, related presentations are only superficially made and usually covering catastrophes and coup d'états.

Although major newspapers do a somewhat better job, local newspapers excel in neglect of news about black Africa. Only countries with outrageous leaders or somehow confronted with tragedies obtain plenty of mostly negative attention that unfortunately contributes to the wrong perception of Africa and the bad treatment of its citizens.

To paraphrase one Nigerian official, "what kind of image of western countries will Africans get from African newspeople's reports on crime, homelessness, rape, drugs, armed robbery and other vices of everyday life in most western metropolises over a year period?"

This is precisely the point behind the theme of this year's Africa Nite. The picture of Africa painted outside its borders is one that reinforces stereotypes about the continent and does more damage to its people than good. Schools systems complete neglect of this issue is along with societal attitudinal bias, an additional factor contributing to the maintenance of the distorted view of Africa and its assets.

There must therefore be some room for stories about governments that are turning their countries around from

long histories of violence and chaos. There are many African countries whose efforts to get even the basic services working again just go unnoticed and unappreciated by the world community. Other aspects of life in Africa presently ignored by foreign media deserve the same coverage as the juicy reports on extreme suffering and misery.

Given the above, it can be speculated that Africa's undercoverage and neglect in the world is the product of natural racism of power holders in any given environment outside Africa.

Even in this UNB academic environment, African issues do not receive exceptional consideration compared to other groups. The same can be said about the provincial and federal governments which both have shaken the Earth and the sky just to penetrate the Asian-Pacific market and are now endeavouring to expand NAFTA beyond Mexico. But I have yet to see a Team Canada to capitalize on opportunities currently presented by emerging African DRAGONS despite economic performances comparable to Canadian preferred markets.

Basically, it is time that GOOD NEWS BECOMES ALSO SOME NEWS.

If one thing can be said of Africans, it is that they are very resilient people who often manage to bounce back from adversities. Lots of African cities are today going back to a semblance of normality with flourishing commercial activities. Africa is today far from the skeletal and distressed continent portrayed in sordidly realistic images from Ethiopian and Somali crisis. It is a fertile ground for trade and identified by many as the continent of the future par excellence.

Africans are today embracing democracy, deregulation, liberalism and privatization. More and more of them are associating industrial development with a sane and peaceful political environment. Dictators are being substituted by more competent, sensible, open-minded and business-oriented heads of states.

Many of them are deepening the state of law while others are succeeding in reconverting their armies into productive duties. Some are even reviewing projects badly negotiated with developed countries by their predecessors in order to discard the ones that greatly disadvantage them.

As a result, many countries are today showing ample signs of their ability to honour their debt, reassure their creditors, augment their credits and reinforce their credibility with their development partners.

Some of these countries achieved rates of growth and investment rates comparable to those of Asian-Pacific countries. There are even those which are presently managing to import a labour workforce from as far away a country as India for low-paying jobs.

Among countries of immense potential are Botswana, Mauritius, Tunisia, Morocco and the others which have stock markets with the Republic of South Africa representing the biggest giant.

The multiple and considerable resources of Africa include over 50% of the world cobalt and large reservoirs of petroleum, diamond, chromium and many other minerals. Africa still constitutes a major source

of coffee, cacao, rubber and many other agricultural goods. It is still located at points militarily strategic for superpowers to fight over.

But the African continent means more than just its economic and strategic values as one African President put it eloquently: "Africa is a whole continent without which the world could not exist." Its people, resources, potential and future are all but essential to today's world.

It is in that context that positive reporting of accomplishments of some African countries be given appropriate priority to encourage successes gained in reshaping these countries' economies or future and building multiracial societies in some cases.

It goes without saying that Africans should play a major role in repairing their image by bringing attention to their successful development stories and making the whole world taste the African spirit, enthusiasm and will to make the best of what one has.

They have to primarily demonstrate their determination not to rest until there is enough homes, jobs, schools, and teachers, hospitals and doctors, electricity and water, radio and television, telephone and television, cable and computer for everybody.

To repeat President Nelson Mandela's quote of an American writer, I quote:

"A person who does what all others can do is a normal person.

A person who does what only a few others can do is an exceptional person.

A person who does what no other person has done is a genius, an asset, a national institution."

Africa needs men and women who are going to strive to be geniuses, national assets and institutions who will always fight to ensure a better life for others. They also have the capacity to be all the above providing that they try. I therefore take this occasion to solemnly urge my colleagues ASU members to respond to President Mandela's calling by breaking free of any fear of free expression, of original leadership, imagination and creative thinking.

Let us pledge to be A PROMISE and AGENTS OF CHANGE who will endeavour to bring about unprecedented transformation and societal justice, faith and pride in our countries and our belief in their salvation.

Let us turn our dreams into hopes to make the difference in building an Africa we want for ourselves as well as for our children as it is our continent, our image and our dignity that are at stake.

Let us not write ourselves off nor give ourselves up but let us reclaim ourselves.

Let us make today's date a memorable one marking our departure from apathy, irresponsibility and fear of free speech to make of us forces to be reckoned with in our present and future lives for the benefit of Africa and the global village.

God bless us all and Africa.