

Art Centre threatened

By NANCY KEMPTON
Brunswickan Staff

In the past, 0.6 per cent of UNB's annual operating budget has been devoted to cultural activities. "Is this too much to ask for the maintenance of such a vital facet of the community?" asks Jerome Sabat, UNB computer science professor and member of the Creative Arts Committee for the past seven years.

Loss of the UNB Art Centre and its related services is dangerously threatened due to severe reductions in funding instituted by the university administration under the auspices of President James Downey.

Bruno Bobak, resident artist and director of the Art Centre since 1962, and five musicians in residence including the Brunswick String Quartet, were informed by a letter from Downey of the cutbacks and possible loss of their jobs. This occurred following budget committee recommendations for future elimination of the arts facilities. The committee actually advised Downey a year ago to drastically reduce funds but he said he resisted this advice as long as he possibly could.

Sabat expressed a great deal of concern over this action and the way it was handled. "There is no place for autocracy in the 80s," he said. The letters were written in the summer without first discussing the news with the artists involved. The artists had little chance to seek public assistance as most students were absent for the summer. University officials made no official statement, and were rarely available for comment, according to Christina Sabat, freelance journalist and Mr. Sabat's wife.

The Sabats said they feel a question arises as to the actual amount of consideration and investigation awarded to this funding decision.

"If Downey knew about the budget committee proposals a year ago, why did he not initiate a study into alternate solutions or fund raising possibilities then?" said Mrs. Sabat. She said he claims he gave the artists enough time to locate other jobs and monetary resources, after writing the letters this summer.

Mr. Sabat said such a small portion of the annual budget awarded to fine arts is not going to really help the administration cut down on its approximate \$1-million deficit.

He said the administration proposes to place another university official in Bobak's position as director of the Art Centre, and this costs money as well as a loss of expertise.

The local news media have not been very enthusiastic about covering this continuing struggle because, according to the Sabats, they claim it is an internal matter of UNB in which they do not wish to be involved. The Sabats said cultural activities at UNB are far from narrow in scope. The musicians tour across the province. Exhibits from internationally distinguished artists are shown at the centre. The Fredericton community is welcomed to view talents displayed on campus, as well as participate in art classes and attend various lectures.

Mr. Sabat said Downey and the administrative body are not taking cultural affairs at UNB seriously.

"I feel the administration treats all of that as a frill," he said. He and Mrs. Sabat reiterated many times the belief that university is more than a place to go to classes. The whole atmosphere of education can only be strengthened and enriched by good cultural opportunities, said Mr. Sabat. "First the football team was eliminated and now art programs are being seriously threatened. Next summer while students are gone, the administration may decide to shut down the faculty of education or something else that ridiculous. The situation is that serious. Let's call a spade a spade. This whole thing is stupid."

Mr. Sabat said every program at UNB should not have to financially balance itself. The value is not only monetary, cultural programs create a drawing force towards UNB for potential students. He said our Art Centre is thought of as a unique and valuable resource by Concordia university chairman of the visual arts faculty, Donald Andrus.

Mrs. Sabat said a number of students have switched to or gone on to further studies in the visual arts because of the beginnings of interest at UNB. Many professional artists had their first exhibits at UNB. Bruno Bobak is a highly respected artist and his influence, according to Mr. Sabat, along with the good facilities here have prompted several reputable artists to exhibit at the Art Centre.

Mr. Sabat said the damage has already been done: Bobak

and the musicians have been insulted and are attempting to function in an atmosphere of insecurity. He said he feels Downey is now trying to sweep the whole matter under the rug. Mrs. Sabat said, "It's as if he wished the whole situation would just fade away." They both agree any attempt to better the situation would just be

a face-saving act on Downey's part.

Mr. Sabat said he is concerned the arts committee has no financial machinery to combat these actions. In the past, the university president often represented and supported the Art Centre at board meetings. Now the centre is faced with a

university president who has instituted drastic monetary cutbacks, and an absence of official representation on any decision making body.

"The students must realize how imperative it is for them to voice great concern about the cut in funds and a desire to keep the Art Centre alive," said Mr. Sabat.

United way appeal under way

By TIMOTHY LETHBRIDGE
Brunswickan Staff

The annual Fredericton United Way appeal will officially get under way Thursday. This year's goal for UNB is \$28,950 which will be distributed among such organizations as the Red Cross, the CNIB, the Mental Health Institute, Muscular Sclerosis, the SPCA, CHIMO and the Scouts.

Last year, \$26,488 was collected from the month-long campaign, somewhat lower than expected. This year's goal for St. Thomas University is \$1,750.

One common misunderstanding many people have about United Way is that it includes all charities, so there is no reason to give to other appeals. Such is not the case, as many national organizations such as the Salvation Army, the Heart Fund and the Cancer Society run their own independent campaigns.

The campaign is organized by a central committee of about 10 people who are responsible for various sectors of the population, such as national firms and government offices. M.D.B. Burt of the biology department is the coordinator for the educational sector which includes both universities, The Maritime Forest Ranger School and the local school districts. Under him are five heads of each special campaign. Doug Brewer, the dean of science, is in charge of the UNB campaign, having taken over from Dr. Burt, who was in charge in past years.

Barry Thompson is responsible for organizing student fund-raising activities for the United Way; and Frank Wilson, the dean of engineering, is in charge of other special activities.

At the start of the campaign, envelopes containing pledge cards and general information will be distributed to the faculty and other staff of the university. These can be returned by early December. Students can donate to the appeal by participating in special activities from which the proceeds go to United Way.

During the campaign, a graph will be placed in the Brunswickan showing a golfer's shot getting closer to the \$28,950 'hole'. (Dr. Brewer likes golf!)

In past years, UNB participa-

tion in United Way has been very enthusiastic, especially from students, who like the activities. As well as making financial contributions, anyone can volunteer for such things as stuffing pledge envelopes, by contacting Dr. Brewer at 4586.

Every person who contributes to United Way helps keep the Fredericton community spirit alive. Funds go to good causes, all of which are specially selected. Remember, sometime you may be thankful for the services of a United Way organization.

Awareness week held

By PETER GORHAM
Brunswickan Staff

This week a Disabled Awareness Week was held at UNB and STU. It began with an employment seminar 'Forum '81' on Monday and activities during the week included President James Downey and Dr. Noel Kinsella spending a day in wheelchairs, and a game of goal ball between blindfolded students and blind persons.

This Awareness Week is organized by the International Year of the Disabled Organizational Committee and the Canadian Paraplegic Association in cooperation with the Universities, to sensitize the student population to the situation of disabled persons. "Forum '81" presented more than a hundred employers with the viability of handicapped persons within the work force.

Among the speakers were The Honorable Richard B. Hatfield, The Honorable Mabel Deware, provincial minister of Labor and Manpower, and Gordon Fairweather, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. A panel of employers discussed

the rights of disabled persons, and a group of professionals presented the financial incentives and the services available to employers of disabled persons.

According to organizers, "Forum '81" was very successful in providing information to prospective employers and in encouraging interaction between the many different service agencies dealing with disabled persons.

Other events of the week generated a lot of student interest. The panel discussion "Awareness Of Disabled Persons" held Tuesday at Edmund Casey Hall, drew over two hundred students.

A student slalom involving three events with students temporarily "handicapped" was to be held Wednesday between teams from Vanier, Harrington, and the faculties of Nursing and Forestry. This event was cancelled due to bad weather and is being rescheduled, for information call Rick Price 455-9607.

It is encouraging to see such positive action in this, the International Year of The Disabled.