

MUGWUMP

by Allan Carter

Why is it that some professors will not admit that they are holding midterms? I have one professor who insists that she is giving tests. So, for those professors who feel they are not giving midterms here are some facts. FACT #1 - the material you are testing the students on include everything from the beginning of the year. FACT #2 - The alleged "test" is being held in the MIDDLE of the TERM, therefore they are called MIDTERMS. The next time I here "test" I hope it is when somebody at the Bruns is checking to see if his/her tape recorder is working.

I find at this time of year it is very difficult to stay awake in class. I am forever nodding off only to wake up realizing that the professor is almost finished her/his lecture and that all I have in my notes to prove that I even attended the class are scraggly marks all over my looseleaf. I have tried many techniques in order to stay awake in class. TECHNIQUE #1 - Wake up with the attitude that you are going to class in order to further your education and nothing, absolutely nothing (not even Mr. Sandman), will stand in your way to pursue this goal. TECHNIQUE #2 - Take coffee to class with you and drink it slowly so it will last the entire class. TECHNIQUE #3 - Try to get more than four hours of sleep each night.

Personally, I find none of these techniques work so don't even bother reading them. The only technique that works is to miss your morning classes so you will be refreshed and wide awake for your afternoon classes.

The bi-elections were held at UNB this week and as usual there were many mix-ups. Apparently, the pollsters did not receive any ballots until 10:20 am despite the fact that it was advertised that the polls would open at 9:00 am. Furthermore, at three polling stations I noticed only one worker monitoring his/her station. According to the UNB Student Union Constitution this is a no-no. Two pollsters are needed at each polling station in order to avoid ballot stuffing and other nasty, dishonest stuff.

I find these mix-ups quite ironic when you consider that the Student Union recently discussed at one of their meetings how they could get more students out to vote. One fabulous idea was to send out ballots through the mail to students. Perhaps, this would be a good idea, since through the mail we wouldn't know if the ballots are late or not.

The candidates who lost in this year's election should demand a re-election. It appears to me that there were too many irregularities in this bi-election. I think there was a conspiracy and something should be done about it (close-up of protestors). This election was an embarrassment to the Canadian system and the Canadian way (National Anthem kicks in). I'm sure the Student Union would not hesitate in holding a re-election just to ensure that everybody, both voters and candidates, are treated in a fair and democratic manner (applause, standing ovation, a close-up of the Canadian Flag and John A. MacDonald).

Some more letters have appeared in Blood and Thunder this week (and they even have titles). Nevertheless, the space is still quite empty on that page and we here at the Bruns have to scramble around each week in search for filler. Maybe something interesting will come up in either this issue or the next which will entice students to write in to Blood and Thunder. It would be nice to see a few letters which are not CoR oriented. This paper's letter column is starting to look more and more like the Daily Gleaner's.

Speaking of CoR, there are two letters in Blood and Thunder this week which you should take time to read. Both the letters basically deal with the same issues and have the same surname. However, there are some very interesting comments in at least one of them. Apparently, M.L. Fleming has prematurely decided what my feelings are on multiculturalism and affirmative action. In fact he/she figures I have been brain-washed by the school system. Well, I will admit I did take a philosophy course in ethics last year which dealt with affirmative action (horrors!). However, I would like to assure the frightened M.L. Fleming that there was much discussion on the issue in the class I attended. In fact, we were even allowed to argue against affirmative action, neat eh? But M. L. Fleming believes that the educational system should not deal with such issues. In fact, he/she states that "educators should get back to the three r's with some geography, history, and science thrown in for good measure." Kind of like a baking a cake throw in a few ingredients for good measure.

Fleming, Fleming, Fleming, Fleming, Fleming, Fleming, let me explain some realities to you. Students tend to learn the "the three r's" in Elementary and Junior High School. And if they don't catch them there, they try to grab them in High School before they enter university, trade school, college or whatever. I agree that perhaps we have lost some of the basics in our educational system, but those basics should be taught in elementary and junior high. By the high school level, students would be facing controversial issues while learning English, History and other courses. Of course it is true that whoever teaches these issues will be bias to one view or another, but then again so is every book and magazine we read - that is life.

Oh, by the way Nick Oliver is not a pseudonym. He is a real person. Although, apparently, one of the SUB polling stations didn't have his name on their list. Another irregularity. A re-election! I demand a re-election! (close-up of crazed, short man being dragged away by police)

OPINION

The opinions found in Opinion are not necessarily the views of The Brunswickan

The hit mini series of the year. *The "Thomas Hearings": some reflections.*

by Kwame Dawes

Clarence Thomas is now a Supreme Court Justice. His confirmation was dramatic and most titillating particularly during the last four days. Anita Hill remains a professor in Oklahoma and life continues as usual. Much has been said about the implications of the testimony during the past few days for women, for blacks and the for the supreme court, but I must confess that that I have been more fascinated with the remarkable way in which the media latched onto the events and created one of the most watched mini-series of the Fall season.

David Letterman said last night that NBC's Fall season sucks. Maybe, but the hearings certainly gave them a boost. CNN, PBS and ABC joined in the execution of wonderful live entertainment for three four solid days. Because there were some clear lapses in the excitement content during some of the sessions, I took time out to study the editing techniques employed by the directors of the broadcast. There were some impressive moments. The cut aways to Ted Kennedy in the middle of the more touchy moments in Anita Hill's allegations, the quick cut from Specter to the fumbling old Democrat during Mister Macho Dougget's tirade about the unfair way in which he was being treated, and the startled cowed looks of the Democratic senators during Thomas' unflinching attack on them.

Somebody lied, that's for sure, but that list must include some of the senators. Many will recall Specter's attempt at characterizing Thomas' statements about "high-tech lynching" as an attack on the special interest groups when they were in fact a direct attack on the entire senate. He managed to get one of the witnesses, a nervous historian, to distort her analysis of the historical veracity of Thomas' assertion to the extent of exonerating the senators of blame for the injustices that Thomas sought to pin on them.

Each of the senators claimed that they had no part in the leak that reached the newspapers but the fact is that it must have come from one of them or at least from one of their staffers. Something smacked hypocritical in the way in which the Democratic senators cringed at the prospect of asking Thomas about his interest in pornography as a university student. Why were they so silent? Why was Ted Kennedy silent? All America knows why. It is clear that some of the top ranking Democrats were not convinced that what Thomas did was so bad. In fact they acted the way they did because they could not attack Thomas with a clear conscience. Now while the Republicans can be forgiven for their unwillingness to believe Anita Hill or to press Thomas on such issues, the same cannot be said for the Democrats. If you had been awake at three o'clock on Sunday night you would probably recall the giddy banter of some of the Republican senators about their own indulgence in pornography as university undergraduates. They laughed it all off as a big joke and utilized the old boy's "nudge and wink" technique of diminishing the importance of this piece of evidence.

Indeed, by so doing, they demonstrated that they really did not find the accusations to be as abhorrent as they pretended they were. They showed themselves to be true politicians with the chameleon like quality of hypocrisy and shifting values. It is this that should worry women who are faced with the prospect of proving that they have been sexually harassed. The truth is that the polls that were conducted which apparently showed that most people believed Thomas can not be taken absolutely seriously because the audience was treated to a limited and unbalanced examination of the facts of the issue and Clarence Thomas had a easy time of it. Had the Democrats been less lenient with him, less intimidated by his tirade, public opinion would have been different.

The point is that like any mini-series, the performance of the actors will guide the opinions of the audience. In this series the odds were against our believing Anita Hill because the protagonists did not honestly think much of what she said. You see, I just find it hard to believe that any of the senators really felt that Thomas should not have made the Supreme Court if the allegations were accurate. The fact is that few of them are sitting on the Senate with abysmal records in the morals and ethic department. The Anita Hill fiasco was merely a tool to carry-out political ends and we should never lose sight of this.

Sexual harassment in the work-place will continue because people are not yet convinced that as long as nobody was touched it is enough to destroy the harasser's life. This is the sad reality that the hearings, not the decision, brought home to me. I was entertained, but I was also amused at the way in which we all became split on what we believed to be true. The end note of this event should be that the assertion by people like Bush that the public got a chance to see the facts for themselves and make a decision is wrong. We did not get a chance to see all the facts. We did not get to ask the questions ourselves and while we may have been able or willing to ask some of those questions many of the senators dared not because of their own reputations..

America likes to celebrate its wonderful freedom of speech and justice system but there is another force at work in all of this which is proving to be as tyrannic as it is entertaining. I am referring to show biz, folks. That's what it's all about.

PS. Here is my theory, anyway. I think Thomas and Hill were great pals. I think he did say those things to her, but she did not find them overwhelmingly offensive. Maybe she found them funny at the time and did laugh. I suspect, though, that after a while she began to wonder whether she was cheapening herself, and when he began to remove her from the inner circle she did feel slighted and used. She was abused but had been willing to live with it. In my scenario, Thomas is still guilty, but the relationship was more complex than we think. And so what if it is a wrong analysis, it makes for a wonderful play. Dennis Miller has a point when he says that Danny Glover must be one happy fellow right now.