

MUGWUMP

OPINION

The views found in Opinion do not necessarily reflect the views of
The Brunswickan.

by Lynne Wanyeki

Mugwump again! I've managed to neatly avoid doing this for the past two weeks, but was accused of being a "wimp", so decided it was time to grace this column with my verbal garbage yet again. Yes, the abuse that streams in after every issue does get to me. I've been called everything from a "subversive little feminist", to a "leftist with a Third World mentality", to "a dumb bim on the rag" (my personal favourite). Thanks a lot. Why don't you just tear my already raggedy ego into shreds? However, I'm told it comes with the territory . . .

On to bigger and better things. . .

One of my professors informs me that the youth are radical by definition, while those more ripened by time and sunshine (Sunshine? What am I saying?) gradually become conservative. This, however, doesn't apply to our generation. No-one has the guts or the imagination to be radical anymore. Or maybe it's the energy. Or maybe it's just that being radical doesn't seem to get anyone anywhere. Or maybe it's the old argument about "conforming to non-conformity", which leads to "preaching to the already-converted". Or maybe I'm just gabbling . . . There was a point here . . . Ah yes! The radical youth? What a joke! Some glaring examples . . . the posters plastered all over our no-longer hallowed halls. Yes, the Student Union candidates. Congratulations to those who had the good sense, or the humble sense, or whatever, to leave their pictures off the tacky little things. There's something so pretentious about campaigning. Where on earth do we learn to play these little roles anyway? I'm sick of confident-looking, earnest-looking, slimey-looking candid smiles. Spare me the popularity contests.

This week, the *Brunswickan* is putting out its 125th Anniversary Supplement. At least they tell me it's our 125th year in print. I don't know . . . I'm only an Arts student, but it seems like simple mathematics to me. If the predecessor to the *Brunswickan* came out in 1867, it should be only our 124th year . . . Anyway, the point being, we're celebrating our glorious history this week. We had an Open House all week long, complete with free coffee and doughnuts, but only 2 (yes, that's right, only 2) intrepid souls ventured down here to see what goes in to putting YOUR paper out. (This statistic is not counting all those greedy Student Union and CHSR types, who came in to grab coffees and doughnuts and run). Ah well . . .

And finally, lest I forget that *Mugwump* is axe-grinding time--I have a double-headed axe to grind this week. To those of you calling for a "Straight Supplement". . . open your eyes and look around you! The whole world is a "Straight Supplement"! Even toothpaste is sold by the image of the cheery straight couple, complete with sparkling teeth and fresh breath. That's OK, I like sparkling teeth and fresh breath myself. And advertising companies target the majority. Student newspapers, however, can afford to be inclusive. And if you don't like it, come in and work with us, and do something about it. Or write letters. We got lots of letters this week. This is good. We like letters. It shows us that you're bothering to at least flick through the pages we spend hours trying to put together. (There! If that isn't lining myself up for a couple more verbal-shots, then I don't know what is).

Well, enjoy your weekend. Actually, you'd better enjoy your weekend--it may well be your last fun-filled AND guilt-free weekend until the end of April. For a little bird tells us that the FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE will be out next Friday. This statement is, of course, made on the dubious assumption that you have consciences that bother you when you play instead of work . . .

Student apathy at UNB

by William Mountan

This article has been written to invoke a debate, criticism and, in time, action: the latter being so rare on this campus. During the three years I have been attending this institution, I have come to realize just how pathetic the people are on some, if not most issues. It is bad enough that you are generally of a pathetic nature, but it is especially bad when coupled with apathy. This has been seen throughout this school year on various issues, maybe even more so than I have seen in my first two years here.

There are many contentious issues which could be raised here, but I will limit my focus to just a few.

1) Varsity Mania. Overall, I think that it can be greatly beneficial to the University, but this will not be reliable if it continues to be run as it has been to date. Varsity Mania, as explained to me, was started as a means of providing the students on campus with an introduction to the various sporting activities, such as soccer, Hockey (both ice and field), etc.. However, from my personal experience it is doing an inadequate job. As an admirer of all sports in general, I attended the majority of the home games and was continuously disappointed on Varsity Mania days. It was not the turnout, but rather the lack of a follow-up in attendance for the successive games. It is a pity, to both regular supporters and no doubt to the teams, that students couldn't make time to attend sporting events that they were not able to win prizes at. What is the motivational factor for attendance? What kind of organization doesn't even offer a follow-up to keep the "fans" interested.

2) Protest Movements. This does not even make sense in the context of this University. They are embarrassments to both those who participate as well as to the University population in general. Examples of this are as follows: a) The protest of the proposed restructuring of the residence orientation system. Though probably the most successful of the protests which took place this year, it was still disappointing in my opinion. With a little over 300 in attendance out of approximately 2000, it shows the general apathy which is so prevalent on this campus. b) The infamous K.D. protest. What a laugh. Who was the brain which thought up this one? Who in their right mind would try to get the attention of the government when they damn well know that the legislature was not even in session, and that the issue was of little or no concern to the politicians because nobody had approached them directly. If you want to make an impact on a politician - LOBBY! LOBBY! LOBBY! Don't just sit and twiddle your thumbs, get out and put a real effort into trying to persuade government to do the will of the people, your will.

The reason for continuous failure of all the efforts put forward by those with even a little bit of interest, can be traced to the lethargic nature of the school's populace in general. WHY? Are you all yuppies or preppies or whatever you call yourselves now? Do you not care how or in what state you leave this institute for future generations of students? Get off your asses and participate.

A third, and probably most pretentious segment of this letter will no likely get me into trouble. However this is of no consequence, as that this has to be said. This is the issue surrounding the question of a homosexual section of this school's newspaper, *The Brunswickan*. I, and I am sure, many of you do not like it. Why should we? What makes gays so special that they deserve a section of their own in this paper? You do not see a column written by a heterosexual exclaiming the joys or troubles associated with being one. So why should gays and straights both be reminded every week that they are there? Are they afraid that if they don't proclaim it to the world weekly they will lose their gayness? Do they need this as a "fix", like that of a junky? Are there any withdrawal symptoms? Frankly, I do not know, nor do I care. This case can be said to be strengthened with the recent printing of eight full pages of this very subject. Though you may not believe me, I do not mean any great disrespect. However, it must be admitted that for all the complaining which is being done by the population of this school, it is not getting you very far. If you want to show that you are not an apathetic bunch, you must do the same thing which the gay segment of students who are not showing their apathy. Because of this article I will no doubt be called such names as bigot, redneck, etc., that does not annoy me in any way because I know that I am none of these. That is simply up to me to decide. It is only too bad that this is the only issue which raises any sort of political debate on this campus.

My final statement is to say that I have decided to run for political office in this austere institute. This is not so much that I wanted to do it, but because nobody else wants to. It is pretty bad when an election deadline cannot be met because there are 14 seats waiting to be filled. What this letter is really is a challenge to you, the student, to get out and participate and not leave it to the next person. If you do not run for a seat, at least get out and vote, show everybody that you have at least half an interest in your welfare as a student.

To conclude, I am calling on you apathetic denizens to respond to this letter, and to show some interest for a change. Show the members of this school that you are worthy of them, and vice-versa. I want response to this letter, whether it is positive or negative is of no concern to me. Don't be the person who expects somebody else to act on your behalf. Be an instigator, make a political statement. Whether I come out of this admired or detested is of no concern to me, as long as I know that what I have said has resulted in action. If you respond, do not use a pseudonym, use your own name, for I have no respect for those who make a statement and then remain anonymous, and neither should you!