



# the BRUNSWICKAN

Volume 130 • Issue 1 September 13, 1996 Second Class Mail #8120  
Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication • University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B.

## President against tax on books Former Neill House resident on trial for sexual assault

GORDON LOANE

THE BRUNSWICKAN

UNB President Elizabeth Parr-Johnston has added her voice to a growing chorus of groups and individuals calling for a tax exemption on books.

Currently book purchasers pay theseven per cent GST, but that is set to increase to fifteen per cent next April when the new harmonized sales tax comes into effect in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

The proposed tax increase has set off alarm bells particularly in New Brunswick's literary community, but it will affect not just writers, publishers, booksellers and libraries. It will also affect students.

Some are now calling for the entire tax to be scrapped on books next April and it is a proposal that UNB's President supports.

"The proposed tax is expensive to UNB's library system and even more importantly, to our students," said Parr-Johnston in an interview with *The Brunswickan* this week.

"I understand our Minister of Finance in this province has said that he is talking with his colleagues and he is reasonably optimistic that he can get that exemption."

"We would hope that is so," said Parr-Johnston.

"It is a major issue and we are hoping that the minister, in discussions with his counterparts, can resolve the matter," she said.

Parr-Johnston's decision to support the tax exemption on books is terrific news, according to Shawn Rouse, President of the New Brunswick Student Alliance.

"I think the message has been received by the provincial government and there is a fairly good chance there will be an exemption given the recent comments of New Brunswick Finance Minister Edmond Blanchard.

But just in case the message has not yet been received, Rouse said students intend to step up their campaign for the tax exemption in the next few weeks. The campaign will be launched on two fronts, according to Rouse.

"We have to lobby the federal minister now, Paul Martin, and the NB Student Alliance and other student groups across the country will now concentrate on that over the next few weeks."

The "Don't Tax Learning Campaign" will ask students to send postcards to both the New Brunswick and Federal Ministers of Finance.

"The postcards will congratulate NB Finance Minister Edmond Blanchard for his current stand on the issue and ask him not to change his mind," Rouse said.

"A further set of postcards for federal Finance Minister Paul Martin will lobby him to allow the tax exemption on books in the memorandum of understanding between the federal, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland governments," Rouse concluded.

Meanwhile, the co-owner of Kingfisher Books on Queen Street in Fredericton said this week he is pleased that the President of UNB and student groups have chosen to speak out on this issue.

Eric Aubanel said as he sees it, the tax would only be a negative for the university.

"It think it is very important that



Pat FitzPatrick Photo

public figures like Elizabeth Parr-Johnston speak out," he said. "It does put pressure on the government."

Aubanel is urging everyone concerned about this issue to keep up the pressure on the government for the tax exemption on books.

"We are afraid that when the final

negotiations come, if government has not heard anything for a while that they might just sort of think, 'oh well! The furor has died down and we will just go ahead.'"

"So I think it is important to keep up the pressure," Aubanel concluded.

K BROOKLAND

THE BRUNSWICKAN

(This is the first of a two-part series on the trail of Jacob K. Smith. In order to protect the identity of the complainants in this case, they will be referred to as A, B and C.)

There was a snag at the outset of the proceedings against Jacob Kees Smith, the former Neill House resident charged with three counts of sexual assault.

The selection of jurors came to a halt in Fredericton's Court of Queen's Bench Monday morning after only 11 members were sworn in. The Sheriff had to go out into the streets to get four more prospective jurors to complete the selection process.

The jury of five women and seven men, for the most part middle-aged, then received instructions from Madam Justice Margaret Larlee.

Crown Prosecutor Hillary Drain, in her opening address, alleged the crimes took place in Neill House and offered three exhibits as evidence. The exhibits consist of a written statement signed by Smith, and two videotapes of interviews with the accused by Fredericton City Police Officer, Corporal Larry McGuire.

McGuire was with the Criminal Investigation Division at the time of the investigation. He met with Smith at 4:20 am November 4, 1995 for the first interview, during which Smith admitted that he'd had sex with A but did not use a condom, though he "planned on wearing one."

Asked if he put her out in the hall, Smith responded, "I might have kicked her out; that's what I planned on doing...can't say for sure."

Though Smith drank four beer and about ten glasses of Red Death (a mixture of 40 proof vodka, Kelly's wine, Kool Aid, and cough drops), he said he felt good but was not drunk and "knew what was going on." He also pointed out that A told him she had been drinking that night but he did not see her drink anything. "She was not drunk," said Smith.

According to Smith's videotaped interview, he asked A if she would sleep with him and she said she would. After Craig (Rainer) left Smith's room, A "took her clothes off and we had sexual intercourse."

Smith then went out for pizza and when he got back "the Don of the residence was looking for me." He went to the Don's apartment and was told the police were looking for him. "They told me some girl was complaining of sexual assault." He said that he was asked by the police to go to the police station.

"The guys always get screwed over in these things," he told McGuire.

Tuesday, the second day of the trial, began with Smith's second police interview, which took place on November 6, being played for the jury.

McGuire told Smith that B had said that Smith knocked her down on the floor and tried to take her pants off, and that Smith said to her "You're going to fuck me." She told police she refused and that Smith then said, "give me a blow job and we'll forget all about it."

McGuire then informed Smith that C's story was about the same as B's and within the space of an hour, he tried [to have sexual intercourse with] C and A, and that A said there was physical pain. McGuire said Smith stopped when C said stop, but that later he was more aggressive with B and then more aggressive again with A.

Smith, his head in his hands, said, "I still dream about it," and, "my life is ruined." (At the end of this interview, Smith was released on his own undertaking.)

The second witness for the Crown was C. She lived in Tibbits Hall at the time of the alleged assault. C said that on Friday, September 22, she went to Neill House with a girlfriend to party with the guys.

"I met Jacob and he asked us to go dance in his room with his friends...I danced with Jake and he asked if he could take advantage of me."

C said that later he pulled her out of the room and they went to a room on the third floor. "He tried to kiss me, he got on top of me. I pushed him off."

C then got him to go get a condom and when he left she locked the door. There was a knock on the door and thinking it was her girl friend looking for her she opened it. "But it was Jake. He put his hands up my shirt, ...down my pants. ...He touched my breasts over my bra. He touched me over my panties." C said she did not know what room they were in.

Smith was suspended from SafeWalk because C reported the alleged assault. She added that on October 27 she went to Neill House to visit two friends and to watch a movie.

"Jake came up to me and made remarks, saying 'I remember you' and he kept saying 'You're the one I raped, right?'"

A friend of C testified later that she saw Smith coming out of a room on the third floor, asked him where C was and was told C was on the second floor passed out. She could not find her on the second floor and went back to the third floor room where Smith was earlier. She banged on the door but there was no response. Shethen got George Younker, a Neill House resident, to knock on the door.

## Fate of SUB expansion should be decided soon

GORDON LOANE

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Plans to expand the Student Union Building on campus appear to be in limbo at the moment, but there are positive indications from UNB's new President that some important decisions are in the offing.

"I have asked Associate Vice-President Campus Services and Planning Mike Ryan to meet with a committee of Student Union representatives to give them the parameters, to look at what the options are," said President Elizabeth Parr-Johnston in an interview with *The Brunswickan* this week.

The move follows an earlier meeting between Parr-Johnston and the UNB Student Union Executive.

At that meeting Parr-Johnston promised to get back to the SU Executive with more specifics on the SUB Expansion project.

One specific uppermost in the UNB President's mind is the participation of St. Thomas students in any possible expansion project.

"We continue to have the issue of the participation of St. Thomas and that is

a key piece because St. Thomas was a part of the original SUB and it would be wonderful indeed if they were a part of any renovations, expansion or whatever we can do," said Parr-Johnston.

"I would hope that if Mike Ryan can meet with the SU and if we can get some sort of a response from St. Thomas as to their role in the project that we can begin to define precisely what we are going to do or not do," she said. "I see no reason in dragging this out."

"Let's see how we can go about doing something whatever that something is," she said.

Meanwhile, UNB SU Vice-President Services Trish Davidson told *The Brunswickan* that Ryan has already indicated an interest in chairing a committee to look at the specifics of SUB Expansion.

The committee has not yet been set up but Davidson was quick to suggest a few members, including herself and that UNB SU Vice-President External Anthony Knight.

Davidson is hopeful that there will be a meeting within the next month. "The first order of business will be to get communication going between the major players—the UNB SU, the St.

Thomas SU, and the UNB Administration."

"We also need to re-evaluate the dollar figures, re-evaluate the time lines depending on St. Thomas' involvement," she said.

Davidson admits the SUB project is "up in the air" and it is a situation she would clearly like to change.

"With UNB's Venture Fundraising Campaign over at the end of 1996, it is critical that we formulate some kind of a concrete time line with some kind of concrete end result."

"I would hope to see this by the end of the academic year," Davidson said.

Clearly Davidson is hoping to attract private sector donations for SUB Expansion. Students have already contributed well over \$500,000 as a result of paying a \$25 SUB Expansion fee over the last three years.

In a letter to this newspaper in early August, Associate Vice-President Ryan confirmed that a further \$250,000 from the undesignated funds collected in the Venture Campaign would be applied to the SUB project.

This was confirmed by former UNB President Robin Armstrong at a June 26 meeting, according to Ryan's letter.

The letter also said that no major donor had yet been found for the SUB Expansion project but at least one prospect was still a possibility.

At the St. Thomas Student Union getting answers from UNB on the SUB Expansion project has taken on a sense of urgency. St. Thomas SU President Carrie Ricker confirms that an October 1 deadline was set by her Council several months ago.

"We set that limit for ourselves and the UNB SU to come forward with a proposal as to why a SUB Expansion referendum should be run again," said Ricker.

Ricker does have several questions about financing, space requirements and possible new services in an expanded SUB.

"We also want to know when a possible project could begin and when will it be completed," Ricker continued.

Of paramount importance to Ricker is more adequate space for St. Thomas student activities and more meeting rooms in an expanded SUB.

For all of these reasons, Ricker welcomes a committee that will try to resolve her concerns.



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