

Editorial Mary Rogal-Black

Student philanthropists: giving while the getting is good?

If your best friend asked you for five dollars, would you reach into your pocket? What if a poorly-dressed stranger on the street asked you for a loonie?

For many people, it's much easier to answer the first question; for the second, if we have an answer, it is sometimes more difficult to explain. Or justify. When I lived in Halifax, it was common to be solicited for spare change when walking down Spring Garden Road. This issue doesn't arise as often for Frederictonians and I'd all but forgotten about panhandlers. I was reminded recently, though, when a friend and I were walking down Regent Street and were stopped by a woman who asked us for money.

My response to these requests varies. Some days I'll hand out all the money in my pocket; once I bought a hot dog for someone who was asking for money for a meal; other times I shake my head as I walk past. This time, I told the insistent woman I was broke, which wasn't exactly true — I had just enough to cover nachos at the Rogue. My friend gave her five dollars.

There's something that seems undignified and untrustworthy about people asking for money on the street. Often, I refuse because I suspect that the money will be used to buy alcohol or some other disreputable item. Sometimes a voice inside me says, "You should have planned better, done things differently. You got yourself into this situation, why should I have to get you out of it? I have things to do."

I call this the Elaine attitude, after the *Seinfeld* character. Upon learning that a friend has been hit by a car, Elaine makes a detour to the snack counter for Juju Fruits before heading to the hospital; she can't wait to dump the older man she's been seeing when he has a stroke and she has to play nursemaid; and she pretends to be deaf so she won't have to make conversation with a working-class limo driver. Elaine is responsible for nobody's happiness but her own.

I don't think the Elaine attitude stems from a fear that we may someday find ourselves walking in their shoes, but rather the opposite: a misplaced confidence that we'll never be in their position. Don't get me wrong, Elaine is one of my favorite TV characters; my concern is that her caricatured self-centredness might serve as a justification for the uncharitable instincts we all have at one time or another.

Along with our sometimes uncharitable instincts, students have a ready-made excuse not to share. We're notoriously poor. We have breathtakingly huge student loans looming on our financial horizons and barely enough money to cover the rent, let alone ever-rising tuition costs.

But wait a minute... Aren't we also keeping two or three local bars in business? Renting videos every weekend? Wearing Doc Martens that cost \$50 per shoe and having lunch at Harveys every second day? While there are many students who are struggling to make ends meet, others are only poor on paper. Few of us take in more than \$13,000 a year, but almost all of us are creative enough to stretch that money out to cover a couple of parties and a ski trip or two.

Students make up an elite class among poor people. If we don't practice philanthropy now, when do we plan to start? When it's time to make payments on our student loan? How 'bout after we've bought our first house and have a mortgage over our heads? In many ways, we're able to pretend that our lives haven't yet begun, that the choices we make now don't have a lot to do with what we'll do when we really become adults. This way, we have the best of both worlds: we're old enough to drink, drive, vote, and live away from our parents; at the same time, we have relatively few responsibilities, we have time and freedom to explore and, if we're lucky, we can go home to Mom and Dad when we need to.

I think I made the wrong decision when I refused to give that woman money. If I've got the best of both worlds I can afford to spread the wealth. What's the worst that would have happened if I'd given away five dollars? Maybe it would have been wasted, but so was the four I paid to rent *Jade*. Which option was likely to make me a better person?

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Mudwump

Joseph W.J. FitzPatrick₃

There's too many of us darn scruff at this 'ere university. And I plus reckon that we're in dire need of some selective breeding and a bit of good old fashion cullin'.

Therefore, in a bid to win the Blood 'n Thunder contest with Mary (that being, who can generate the most), I will delve into the wonderful world of student finances.

Just about half of students at UNB have some sort of financial assistance. That can vary from a minor loan to a full loan covering tuition and living expenses or what passes for them. And people have been trying to reform student aid for nearly as long as it has been in place.

Having waded through much of the suggested improvements of student aid (mainly from the New Brunswick Student Alliance) I feel competent to offer an opinion.

Also, I feel uniquely able to comment on the people who aren't a member of the academic bourgeoisie, despite being a member of these more privileged students (living at home).

Here goes:

University isn't universally accessible and it shouldn't be. Unfortunately, it is too accessible financially, and not as accessible academically. That is, you should be refused university admission because of marks, not money. It is my opinion that, by virtue of the finances of these academically disinclined students, (and the student loan problem that encourages them) people who shouldn't be here if it was based only on marks prevent other people who have the marks, but not the special finances which would permit them to qualify for student aid. Take me, for example, I can not qualify for a student loan unless my parents subsidize my education to the tune of \$7,200 annually. Sure, my father teaches at UNB, but there are six of us, and

more than one should be allowed to attend university, if we want to. I can draw no other conclusion than students with poor academic ability are being let in when 30% flunk first year. I'm not saying that all 30% shouldn't have been admitted, but it is obvious that some should never have come here in the first place.

Student loans are, in theory, here to help students come to university when they would otherwise not be able to afford it. However, as many have pointed out, there are still people who can't get into university. Yet, there is a higher proportion of people in university and with degrees. So much so, in fact, that there are now too many people in university and too many with degrees.

Furthermore, they should not have been told that they needed to come here. In fact, one of our greatest problems, particularly in New Brunswick, is that there are few alternatives financially or "morally."

Go to University. Isn't that a high school student's dream? We are instilled with this fervent desire to go to University or become "non-productive" members of society. As early as Grade 9, we are pushed to choose our career path. And yet, in a province with close to 20,000 university students, there are only 1000 places in community college. At UNB alone, there are more students in Engineering than in all of the trades courses offered at community college in the whole province. This is an unfair to those of us who chose to come here as those who are devalued and dejected (mainly by those of us who do) because they didn't.

The sorry fact of student aid is that it is too successful. It encourages students to go to University over other alternatives. Your post-secondary education should be chosen not because it is cheaper but because it is better for you. The government subsidizes

universities to such a degree that non-government funded courses, like trade schools, are less accessible. A year at a certain business college will cost \$4,000 in tuition. UNB, for all its problems, gets by with less than \$3,000. And there is some argument as to which would get you a better job.

In a market economy, we were told that everybody who went to University got a better job. And it is still true that the person who attends university will have higher earnings in their lifetime (if they are employed). But by injecting thousands upon thousands of students with university degrees, we have, in fact, made the degree less valuable. The fact that there is a greater proportion of students with bachelor degrees has meant that the mere possession of that diploma is now as indistinct as a person with a high school diploma.

And my solution: raise academic standards for admission and change the way loans are administered.

Instead of getting the government to guarantee loans, get them to guarantee access to bank loans. The irrefutable fact is that a university education is the best investment you can ever make. The increase in average earnings will pay back your tuition easily. The solution should be to force banks to lend money to students, much the same way that government attempts to force them to make small business loans.

And what about compound interest and repayment? Well shucks, look at how many people have to scrape up enough money to pay their mortgage, and get to deduct the interest payments from their income tax, why should a student loan be any different? If you have to put off buying your first car or home for five or ten years, so be it. Your education should be more important than a car or a home.

BLOOD & THUNDER

Letters to the Editor

Football necessary to quality university experience

The following is an open letter to Dr. F.S. Eaton, O.C., Chancellor of UNB.

Dear Sir:

May I reflect with great pleasure on the notwithstanding opportunity I had to be in the audience of visiting military officers that you addressed as Canadian High Commissioner in London in 1993.

Your theme at that time, and during our short conversation afterward, was all about what it meant to be a Canadian, our uniquely Canadian institutions and your assertion that we all share uniquely Canadian values which influence our individual success in life and more specifically our national role and stature on the world stage. It is in your present capacity as Chancellor of the University of New Brunswick that I wish to express my grave concerns over the degradation of many of these same values within our UNB community that I petition you today.

You may not be aware that in 1981, selected administrators at UNB imposed a one year suspension of the Canadian varsity football program as a cost-saving measure. That one-year suspension has now drifted through bureaucratic inertia to a full 15 years, without any indication from each intervening administration or President that this suspension would be reviewed or validated in any way.

This policy decision only touched me personally when I revisited the campus in 1982, on one of those quintessential autumnal Saturday afternoons, and from a vantage point surveyed the campus. The silence was deafening, nothing stirred and the campus was bereft of life; it was virtually a ghost town. This was most certainly not the quality of life and campus society that were central to my many years at UNB. The face and culture of UNB had been radically altered somehow; something had gone horribly wrong. I fear that we have sold part of our soul.

No matter how well intended, the decision to cancel Canadian football at UNB may have been shortsighted and it may have been taken by that type of person that knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing. I emphasize may, because the UNB community neither know the identity or nor the rationale of the criteria of the powerful who arbitrarily slashed a highly-successful and popular sports institution as apparently the only alternative to ameliorating financial pressures of the day. When faced with similar pressures, a variety of Canadian universities have selected transparency over secrecy and encouraged the community-wide debate essential to articulating a clearly defined problem, the examination of viable alternatives and the establishment of community priorities. At the universities of McGill, Alberta, Toronto and St. Francis Xavier, the university community, alumni and all concerned municipal and corporate stakeholders were permitted to work through the financial distress involved in order

to save their football programs. I believe that any such process was intentionally denied to me as an individual member of the UNB community and I despair that I was never given the opportunity to affect the fate of a campus institution that has contributed to the building of our uniquely Canadian values and has effectively touched the lives of every UNB student since 1949.

In overt comparison to the sense of community and school spirit engendered by the varsity football programs throughout the Maritimes and across Canada, our students have been ill-served and short-changed by this continued denial of our Maritime sports heritage. This discrepancy is being addressed by a burgeoning organization of like-minded individuals called the Friends of UNB Football. Presently, they are addressing these concerns to the new President, alumni and the student body.

It would certainly be inappropriate to draw

the University Chancellor into a debate over the future of Canadian football at UNB. Yet, the lack of public debate over the original decision of 1981 which remains my specific, and I believe shared, grievance with the University's handling of this matter and it is a grievance which remains to be redressed. Correspondingly, I believe that it is appropriate to petition the good offices of the Chancellor to ensure that this latest attempt to reverse the original narrow policy in favor of a modernized, restructured, cost-effective and relevant Canadian football program be given a fair and open hearing by the present administration and that our new President be encouraged to support the widest possible public debate of this issue critical to the quality of university life.

R. J. Walker
BPE '72, BA '74, PG Dip Ed '76 UNB
MA, RMC

Prof 'Judgedredd' should be exposed

To the Editor:

In the September 27 issue of the *Brun* (which I saw only yesterday) Kelly Lamrock wrote about "Professor Judgedredd" in the Faculty of Law who, apparently rejecting the rule of law, threatened to publicly expose students who plagiarized as part of a student's "academic file" and hence private. Mr. Lamrock called upon the Dean of Law to "make it clear that, even at a law school, no one professor is above the rules." He concluded, "I'm so confident that will happen, that I'm not going to print the professor's name. After all, everyone has rights."

Indeed, everyone does have rights. But a professor who acts toward her/his students in the highhanded and maliciously antinomian way

alleged by Mr. Lamrock has no right to privacy or anonymity with regard to her/his transgressions. I do not believe that abuse of power should be protected by specious claims of privacy. We have seen too much sexual harassment and family violence concealed in this way. What goes on in a classroom is in no way private; it is of legitimate interest to everyone in the University community. The professor should be named.

Accordingly, without either accepting or rejecting the substance of Mr. Lamrock's column, I publicly (Yikes! What can be more public than the eminently questionable professor in question)

Myron Gochbauer
Associate Professor of Law

'Sex-obsessed' male just another stereotype

To the Editor:

Ms Davis obviously did not think before she accused us poor testosterone-crazed silicone-enhanced-breast-loving sex-obsessed males of not caring about the merits of a movie, instead being only concerned with the physical attributes of the female star ("womynism", October 11). Either that or she has a selective perception of reality.

Unfortunately for her thesis, there are quite a few of us media-watchers who rate brains at least as high as physical attributes and some of us care more about talent than bra size. If Davis had risen above the stereotypes she rails against, she might have noted the rather devoted following of actresses such as Gillian Anderson (who has, I would note, shown less skin on her

hit show than most female students at UNB, several feminists who I've heard complain about "male pigs" included).

If physical attributes are more important than talent and character she might be puzzled about why Winona Ryder is more popular than Drew Barrymore or Alyssa Milano.

Finally, to use her own examples and to add another, one would think that if she were correct, the recent films starring Demi Moore stripping, Pamela Anderson stripped and Cindy Crawford half-stripped would have had legions of male standing in line, tongues hanging out and hormones oozing out their pores. *Strip-tease*, *Barbie* and whatever that Crawford movie was (forgettable, wasn't it?) went splat at the box office.

Keith Morrison

University population control

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*This issue is dedicated to:
Jedi Moms everywhere*

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