

The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication

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EDITORIAL

SOME BOOZE TALK AND SOCCER

If I was a bartender or a bar manager, I would find the whole legal scene with regards to the question of culpability in alcohol abuse cases rather daunting and somewhat unfair. I have had the apparently unique experience of being in a bar as a customer at closing time and being at the same time stone-cold sober. Everything moves slower then and emotions tend to shift from extreme to extreme - utter irritability to inexplicable elation - without any orthodox rationale behind the shifts. But the most harrowing thing to watch is the "dialogue" between the inebriated and the stolid and stern bouncers who are trying to clear the bar of people who they are convinced are too drunk to deserve politeness. Then there are the dissatisfied customers who are trying to get that last one for the road. They are totally wasted but will not accept no for an answer. They have the money, after all. Legally, it is the bartender's responsibility to judge the state of the drinking and determine whether they are inebriated or not. If they are the bartender should not supply them with more liquor. The decision is never an easy one to make and drinkers tend to make it more difficult by the insistence that they can handle it.

Should suppliers of alcohol be held responsible for the carelessness of drinkers? Surely, the decision as to whether to drink or not is one made with a conscious awareness of the potential dangers involved. Drinkers know that they will have a hard time making it downstairs when they have had too many beers, so shouldn't they be held responsible for that action? But when does a drinker stop thinking about the consequences and at what point can they be expected to understand the complex equations of self-control and drinking amounts? I have seen too many young, inexperienced people jeopardize their health and safety by being reckless about how much they drink, and sometimes there is a vicious streak in me that is tempted to say that they deserve the "breaks" they get. That is quite unfair, however, especially since drinking is an accepted social past-time in this country. In fact, my first taste of culture shock came when I heard a number of young male and female students bragging about how great a weekend they had had. From what I could observe, the extent of pleasure was gauged by how drunk they got and how much they vomited. "Barfing" is an important part of pleasure for many. One can't barf effectively without being totally "wasted". It's a cultural thing. So the laws, despite their seemingly unfair nature are a necessary feature of this drinking scene. Students should be encouraged that they have a right to sue if they are allowed to enter a drinking establishment when they are intoxicated; and being given too much to drink by bartenders . . . this, of course, is as long as some alcohol related problem occurs.

The growing awareness of the dangers involved in drinking in this province is good to note. To my mind, the more we know about and appreciate the shared community responsibility that the entire social behaviours of drinking demands, the better we are as a society.

I was privileged to see the Red Shirts (UNB's soccer team) beat PEI's team last Saturday afternoon just outside the Aitken Centre. This corresponds with a resolution made by myself to attend as many sporting events on this campus this year as my time will allow. There was a good turn-out but I found it hard to cope with the fact that the crowd was more taken up by the spectacle of its own presence than by the game. I mean when the UNB team was obviously pressuring for a goal during the second half, I was tempted to start a chant of "PRESSURE! PRESSURE! PRESSURE!" to spur the team on, but the crowd was singing some unrelated tune, oblivious to the intensity of the purposefulness of this talented team. Still the goal was a gem and it deserved the ovation received. The centre from the right wing, hard and low, and the sharp diving header from the goal mouth, in. Impeccable time! It was good football (I mean soccer). I left with a sense of campus pride which has eluded me for some time. Really, sports do that to you. Without that sense of school spirit, something's missing from one's experience at university.

Thanks to the COR folks who did write a letter in response to the Cardoso article. We encourage such dialogue.



"BOY! WAIT 'TILL WE TELL EVERYONE HOW MUCH FUN WE HAD THIS WEEKEND!"