

Blood and Thunder

Bennett's Reply

Dear Editor,

The March 21 issue of the Brunswickan contained a letter to the editor from Laurence Hansen.

Mr. Hansen declared that I did "not have a pristine record" and implied that I lied to Student Council about Graduate Student Association (GSA) agreement to a referenda question.

To correct Mr. Hansen's misinformation, I stated in Council that the GSA agreed to the TERMS of the referenda question.

In particular, that the GSA be autonomous while graduate students would still be members of the Student Union by virtue of paying a ten dollar per capita fee to the Student Union.

I did not state "clearly and unequivocally" that the GSA agreed with the actual TEXT of the referenda question presented to Council. Council later agreed to a wording that was acceptable to the GSA.

Hansen, in his self-appointed role of Leader of the Opposition in the Student Council, has once again tried to embarrass a member of the SU Executive.

In the future Mr. Hansen should not mix personal and public life and keep his fairy tales out of the Brunswickan.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Bennett
Vice President (Academic)
UNB Student Union

Why The Apathy?

Dear Editor,

We have heard, time and again, about the apathetic nature of students here at UNB. Albeit quite evident that there is a certain measure of truth in this, I am not however immediately concerned with this phenomenon. I would rather bring to your attention the excessive apathy exhibited towards student affairs on the part specifically of the President of the University and the members of the Board of Governors.

I mean to say, why is it that they stand back, with seeming complete indifference as to the goings-on, the other buffoonery and inanity, of students such as John Bosnitch, et al.?

As an aside, I really do hesitate in appending to these characters, ie. John Bosnitch, etc., the status: student. Are they truly students? Is their intent on residing within the university community to complete an educational programme? And if so, does it take eight, nine, or however many years, to do so?

Indeed, do these nondescript individuals, who have contrived to work their way into responsible positions, actually represent the interests of the student population? If not, just whose interests do they represent?

I have witnessed over these past years, under the directorship of Mr. Bosnitch, not only the erection of a dense barrier between the UNB Administration and the SRC, and between the UNB Administration and students, but also the fragmentation of the student body into competing factions, alienated from one another, and in turn, alienated from the UNB Administration.

Further, during the debauched tenure of Mr. Bosnitch and cohorts,

there have been loud hints of misappropriation and mismanagement of funds. Whether or not there is any truth in these hints, I know not; nevertheless, the echoes persist. The doubts concerning the integrity, the sincerity, the credibility, and the honesty of these individuals also continue.

Further, towards what end does Mr. Bosnitch insist upon remaining in office? Surely three terms as president of the student council would suggest that Mr. Bosnitch has designs of sorts, above and beyond those of his titular status, namely, that of being first and foremost a student. But, are we not agreed that Mr. Bosnitch is only nominally a student? Therefore, if these designs do in fact exist, what might they be?

All this - and what more? - should, I believe, warrant you, Mr. Downey, President of our University to take decisive and firm action concerning these nondescript persons.

The extraordinary circumstances arising about, and from, these individuals should (and I urge you to consider this) give you license either to demand their (Mr. Bosnitch's in particular) resignations from office, or, in the extreme, to oust them from the university community. I remind you that in no way will this, or should this, affirmative action be construed as setting a precedent, as it would be taken in the consideration of extraordinary circumstances.

As a student, I invite you Mr. President, and you members of the Board of Governors, to take interest in student affairs, in our affairs, and to restore that harmonious environment and cooperative working spirit which are so essential to the smooth functioning of any thriving university community.

Sincerely,
J.W.J. Baggaley

Pure Ignorance

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank Trius Taxi Ltd., and all managers and especially the owner and millionaire Gordon Wheatley. The service is not all that bad, but now that you're charging drivers a fare to be picked up and dropped off after work, as a customer I'm dissatisfied. Whatever happened to courtesy and good old manners? It appears to me, that it is pure ignorance. I know as a student I have to count every penny, and I'm sure you have part-time drivers that are students who also have to count pennies. I can sincerely thank you and your company for directing me to Student Taxi.

Sincerely,
Margret Sheffield

Katimavik

Dear Editor,

The basis of our democratic society is a free, open debate among rational people. It is with great alarm, then, that I see you and others across the country attempting to circumvent the normal democratic process by appeals to emotion, particularly the emotion of sympathy.

If you feel that the cancellation of the Katimavik program is bad for the country, then for heaven's sake stand

up and give your reasons! I'm afraid I haven't heard too many people explaining exactly why it shouldn't be cut, other than vague appeals to "the future of the nation's youth".

I agree that Canada's young people are among its most valuable resources, and certainly everything possible should be done to encourage the development of those resources. Whether Katimavik is the best way to prepare youth for life in the modern world is something that has yet to be established. From what I have seen, one could probably develop a somewhat better program; but I could hardly claim to be an expert. I would like to hear people who have already gone through the program say what concrete benefits they obtained from it.

Persuade your opponents by reason, not by trying to evoke sympathy (which would surely be misplaced, given that you are willingly hurting yourself). If your ideas are sound, they will survive and prosper. If not, then they shouldn't be adopted. Holding a gun to your head and threatening to blow your brains out if you don't get what you want is not a good way of convincing opponents of the soundness of your ideas; neither is a hunger strike.

Yours sincerely,
Eric R. Smith

Misrepresented

Dear Editor,

I have been misrepresented by Mr. Bennett in his letter to you in last week's Bruns. As a member of the History Department Student Liason Committee, I was asked to explain to him why the students of this committee voted against a departmental request that they administer the SU Teacher/Course Evaluation questionnaire. Mr. Bennett accused me of siding with the "administration" and of trying to score "brownie points". This clearly is not true. He used my explanatory letter to launch a "confrontational" attack on my person. This attack only serves to cloud the issue, instead of clarifying the fact that the SRC is administering their evaluation in an irresponsible manner.

Yours sincerely,
Sandra Gereau

Non-smokers Unite

Dear Editor,

Despite the fact that Ms. Audrey Burpee's letter which you published in your last issue contained so many contradictory statements together with errors of fact, syntax, grammar and vocabulary as to negate almost actively whatever point it might once have had, I feel I must rise to the defence of the maligned (not to mention libeled) professor who was the object of her scurrilous attack.

Any visitor to the cafeteria in D'Avray Hall (at least she got that one right) would see at once that there are in place signs which clearly indicate that one section of the cafeteria is a designated 'no-smoking' area. Ms. Burpee was smoking in that part of the room (incidentally, it is not a 'students' cafeteria as she claimed). In doing so she clearly contravened that regulation. Far from attracting Ms. Burpee's

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rm. 35, Student Union Building, UNB Campus
DEADLINE: 5 p.m. Tuesday

censure, the person deserves her wholehearted commendation for doing precisely what she suggested should be done in her final paragraph, ie. "enforce the presence of a smoke-free area in a portion of this cafeteria".

In her postscript Ms. Burpee also claimed that the cafeteria incident was the sole reason for her letter. Why, in that case, did she feel it necessary to introduce a whole posse of more general issues, including that of smokers rights? Since she did so, however, perhaps I may also point out that of course smokers have rights (and responsibilities, which she conveniently overlooked) but those rights do not include forcing the residue of their lethal and obnoxious habit on other human beings.

I think it is by now apparent that fulsome apologies on at least two accounts are called for from Ms. Burpee. In the first instance she should apologise to your readers for having inflicted on them such a waggon-load of badly written codswallop. In the second, she should apologise to the professor for the libelous and hypocritical comments she made about him and for the errors of fact contained in her letter. If, indeed, he was 'ignorant' as she alleged (surely she means 'rude?') at least he had the good sense not to manifest his 'ignorance' in such a way that the whole world might observe it. One wishes that Ms. Burpee had been blessed with the same good sense.

Yours faithfully,
B.W. Taylor

Bennett's True Colours?

Dear Editor,

By misrepresenting the concerns of the History Department Student Liason Committee regarding the refusal to administer the Student Union teacher-course evaluation form, Mr. Bennett once again shows his true colours.

We informed Mr. Bennett that the idea of the survey or the questions it asks the respondent are in no way unsatisfactory. The committee firmly believes in the process of creating an efficient anti-calendar. At the same time, however, it was felt that the way in which the survey might be distributed, the manner in which the data would be analyzed, and the format for publication were inappropriate. I wish to briefly explain the position of the Student Liason Committee with regard to this.

First, Mr. Bennett informed the Student Union Council that should a professor not wish to administer the evaluation, copies of the evaluation would be deposited around the campus for these students to fill out for that particular course with the course and student number written on them and then leave them at a collection depot. It doesn't take much experience with surbeyes to realize that this system is wholly unreliable. What is there to prevent someone from taking a stack of evaluations to fill out and placing student numbers on them at random (64900, 64901, 64902, etc.)

Second, Mr. Bennett has publicly stated that the only professional advice he has attempted to acquire regarding the survey took the form of a letter to a business professor who deals with this sort of thing. We all know that statistical figures can be made to say whatever one may choose. Therefore, a survey of the nature proposed by Mr. Bennett demands that acceptable rules

of statistical enquiry be used, especially important as the results will be published. Consequently, professional advice is a necessity.

Third and last, the way in which the last survey was published was completely irresponsible. It was designed to be anti-administration and contained cartoons that completely destroyed the credibility as a surveyor of accurate information.

It also seems that Mr. Bennett thinks that everyone who disagrees with him must be trying to score Brownie points with the administration. Nothing could be further from the truth. The History Department Student Liason Committee firmly believes in course-teacher evaluations and supports the publication of anti-calendars. We maintain, however, that to administer it in an unprofessional and irresponsible manner does more harm than good.

Please, Mr. Bennett, let's be reasonable.

Sincerely yours,
Katherine Biggs
Secretary, History Dept.
Student Liason Committee

Poor Humour

Dear Editor,

This letter is in reference to "A POEM" by David Morrison printed in the March 14 edition of the Brunswickan.

The poem was very upsetting to me. The poem's author has attempted to use humour to hide what is clearly a rape scene. The intention of the author is unimportant. What is important is that rape and violence against women in general, has once again been trivialized for male titillation.

Sexual violence is a tragic reality in many women's lives and women are tired of being the subject of men's rape fantasies. The author may laugh this letter off and say that women have no sense of humour. I expect that response. But the next time you fantasize about rape, in whatever context, put yourself in the woman's place - feel her pain, her fear, her humiliation. Then tell me that we have nothing to be upset about.

"Not Amused"

All letters to the editor must be typed or printed legibly and double spaced, and signed along with a daytime phone number. Names may be withheld under extreme circumstances, include a note with the letter requesting such if you wish. The Brunswickan will refuse publication of letters with libellous, sexist, or racist material. Letters over 250 words may be edited for brevity.