

EDITORIAL

Disintegrating books.

A few months ago, I attended a Library Users meeting in the Harriet Irving Library where I listened to one of the librarians describe dramatically, the dire state of the present collections. With some ceremony, he held a normal looking document in his hand and crushed it. The document disintegrated before our eyes into a pile of dust. This document could not have been more than a few decades old but had suffered adversely under the pathetic atmospheric conditions of the Harriet Irving Library. He went on to state that within the next five to ten years, if nothing is done about the temperature and humidity controls of the library, we will be losing a significant percentage of the library's holdings. A frightening prospect.

The weeks following that demonstration found me considering the extent to which I regard a library as important to my success at university. It struck me that the library is perhaps the single most important feature of a university education. I noted that during my sojourn in the United States, I would make especial effort to investigate the main libraries of each campus or city that I visited. I tended to allow my judgement of these institutions to rest squarely on my evaluation of the holdings of these libraries. I recall also, that one of the first things I did when arriving at UNB was to enter the library to see what its periodical stacks looked like. Admittedly, I am a graduate student and I have an inevitably intimate relationship with libraries, but even as an undergraduate, I was distinctly aware that the library was my only recourse when my attendance at lectures and tutorials was wanting. I discovered that it is possible to attend university; miss all lectures; pick up a syllabus and prepare for exams; write essays by simply locating one's self in the library. As long as the right books are there, the library is an essential feature of any university education.

Thus, it is disturbing to note that with the increases in publishing costs and the cut-backs that are taking place in education, that the libraries are suffering significantly. UNB's libraries have managed to maintain a certain respectability over the years despite increasing costs and very significant challenges, but things look like they have come to a head. The library is plagued by significant space problems and it is anticipated that in the next five years all the branches will be full to overflowing. There have been complaints reaching the Brunswickan from library staffers that the new basement offices in Harriet Irving are leading to increased illness and a drop in morale. A new facility will have to be built if the library is to continue to upgrade its collections. The new facility will have to be equipped with the proper temperature and humidity control equipment to ensure that the holdings are properly preserved. The facility should seek to integrate the teaching element of the university with the library setting. One professor impressed me with a vision of the library as containing several small seminar and lecture rooms where classes could be held among the books.

All of this will cost money and require dynamic leadership. I am convinced that students have not yet managed to appreciate their potential role in enhancing university life by helping the library. Graduating classes have donated money for gates, and this year, for a stairwell outside the student Union Building. While I consider such gestures useful, I am sure that future students would be better served if graduating classes invested some money in starting a building fund for the new library. Clubs and societies can be persuaded as they have been in other universities in Canada, to participate in fund raising ventures that will help to make the library even more professional and up-to-date in its holdings. It is time that we stop regarding the library as a facility not unlike the cafeteria. We come here and see it; we use it with some reluctance; we wince at the late charges like we wince at the food prices and then we leave the university and forget completely about the facilities. Who ever heard of alumni donating money to Beaver foods as a sign of appreciation for the wonderful work they have done? Sadly, students often have the same attitude to the library. This must change.

Change can come from three important sources. First and foremost, the library administration must assume a more assertive role in educating the university about the problems faced by the facilities and seek to involve the entire university community in its progress. This may be achieved through the reinstating of those art exhibitions that used to be mounted in the Harriet Irving Library Foyer. Readings by local writers, book launches, lectures in special academic disciplines that UNB is renowned for, along with increased information releases on new developments in the library will only enhance its status and profile on the campus. More joint efforts with the university faculty will certainly ensure that the academics become more appreciative of the role of the library in their success.

Secondly, the faculty can participate by lobbying on the behalf of the library during important budgeting meetings at the university. If professors begin to speak passionately about the need for more financial assistance in the libraries, the administration will be more inclined to respond. Such support will also galvanize alumni help as well. Professors should throw in their lot with the library if they know what is good for them.

Thirdly, students should be encouraged to start seeing the library as a potential source of development. If we appreciate the fact that the library is as central to the university as our faculty office, our hall of residence or the College Hill Social Club, we may begin to discover fresh interesting ways of seeking to assist the library in these times of change.

I am a delinquent user of the library. I get letters all the time, but it only demonstrates how much I depend on the facility. I am concerned about the future of the UNB Library Services and I really wonder why good old Irving is not reminded that the main branch is named after his wife. Still, until the Library Administration starts to take some initiative in informing us about the needs of the facility, I am not sure we will see any great change coming.

The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication
The University of New Brunswick

Editor-in-chief Kwame Dawes
Managing Editor Lynne Wanyeki
News Editor Allan Carter
Business Manager Josée Guidry
Co-Sports Editor Kelly Craig
Co-Sports Editor Frank Denis
Co-Entertainment Editor Stéphane Comeau
Co-Entertainment Editor Sean Malley
Features Editor Ryna Brideau
Offest Editor Vacant
Distractions Editor Jayde Mockler
Photo Editor Dave Smith
Advertising Manager Tara Froning

Advertising Design Lori Durley

STAFF THIS ISSUE

Eric Drummie, Mark, Savoie, Kirk MacDonald, Mary Scott, Dan Druff, Randy Maillet, Murray Nystrom, Paul Arsenault, Boner DaBone, Christine Verhille, Tina Tector, Aime Phillips, Gail Anthony, Karen Burgess, Patsy Wallace, Mimi Cormier, Chantal Richard, Murray Carew, Chris Hunt, Martin E Warren, Dr Vic, Al S Tare, Jamie Rowan, Jamie Taylor, Randy Goodleaf, Kirsten Burgess, Danny Roherty, Collen Coyle, Chris Lohr, Pat Smyth, K Brookland, Cora Ward, Katherine Miller, Bill Traer

Typists Extraordinaire:

Diana Maitre, Heather Kitchen

The Brunswickan, in its 125th year of publication, is Canada's oldest official student publication. The Brunswickan's offices are located in Rm 35 of the University of New Brunswick's Student Union Building, P.O. Box 4400, College Hill, Fredericton N.B., E3B 5A3. Tel. 453-4983.

The Brunswickan is published by Brunswickan Publishing Inc. and printed with flair by Global Printing & Binding Inc., Fredericton, N.B.

Subscription is \$25 per year. Second class mail is in effect - #8120.

Local Advertising rates are available from The Brunswickan. (506) 453-4983. National advertising rates are available from Youthstream Canada Ltd., 1541 Avenue Road, Suite 203, Toronto, Ont. M5M 3X4, Tel: (416) 787-4911.

Articles printed in The Brunswickan may be freely reproduced provided proper credit is given.



by Lynne

More snow
snow ploughs
really resent
adventurous
only to be c
ploughs had
covered in al
step became
back - literal
off - my days
they even bep
Enough al
don't really
complaints
Carnival's sc
sculpture fro
and Harrison
Committee h
who like play
to ski), get a
through old U
of snowy art.
I do, that the
there's much
seems to be

Running t
hear that the
game in it's
five seconds
missed, and
par???) So t
don't knock
SOCCER.

The war in
debate it end
when I see m

This week
supplements
Gays and Bi
students int
4983.

ATTENTI
German She
temporarily

during wal
6 p.m. tired
Street. Her
report it 'til
healthy, gen
name is Astr

Please call 4