

MUGWUMP

by Allan Carter

Okay, how many people have been faithful to their New Year's resolutions this year? I would assume that many of you have already broken them or are just beginning to find out that those mountains you were going to overcome in 1992 are just too big. Well, I have yet to break one resolution in this brand spanking, new year and I'm quite proud of this accomplishment. So far, I have not smoked a cigarette, I have not eaten turnips and I have not played the fiddle. Sheer will power.

The Student Union has also held good on their promise to take another look at the Canadian Federation of Students. At Wednesday's council meeting, council debated for over an hour whether or not they should hold a referendum to reaffirm their involvement in CFS. Council decided that they should. The roll call vote was 15 to 9, with one abstention.

Although council has yet to decide what the questions will be concerning the referendum it is quite evident that there is some doubt about the role UNB has played in CFS and perhaps the role CFS plays itself. However, while some issues were dealt with at the council meeting, I heard no concerns which, in my mind, constitute wasting students' time and money on deciding whether or not CFS is a worthy organization to belong to.

I believe that there are very few arguments which can counter the fact that CFS is a valuable organization. All Student Unions need a major, national voice which can speak out on issues that affect university students. It may be true that some students may not like the direction CFS has taken with some political issues but that, quite honestly, is tough. I may not like what the Student Union does every week at council meetings, but that does not give me the right to hold a referendum every month so everyone can reaffirm that they want a Student Union. Such a notion is absurd. Kelly Lamrock, chair of CFS, made this parallel the other night at the council meeting and I believe he has a valid point. Lamrock also made many other good points which, I may add, were not convincingly countered by the councillors who obviously feel a referendum is needed.

But one point that many councillors did bring up at the meeting was that a good number of students at UNB do not realize what CFS does or the importance of having such a lobbying group. However, I believe many councillors do not feel that the Student Union is actually part of CFS and I wonder how many councillors actually are up to date on CFS's activities. Instead, the attitude among some councillors appears to be that CFS should be taking care of all the public relations at UNB. One councillor pointed out that perhaps CFS has hindered individual Student Unions to become politically involved in national and provincial issues which affect students. I think this is a good point. But, getting rid of CFS won't solve the serious problem of apathy in our Student Union(s). Instead, the Student Union must realize that to make students aware of CFS involves more than a useless educational campaign ran just before a useless referendum. The Student Union must become more actively involved with this national organization so that students can *actually witness* what CFS does and can do. An organization like CFS has millions of real and potential opportunities. Not only is it an actively involved lobbying group which, according to Lamrock, has saved each student an estimated \$305 through CFS's successful lobbying campaigns, it also is an information source which can help any councillor who feels that a pressing issue pertaining to students must be dealt with at his/her own university or even in his/her own faculty. And even if CFS's campaigns only saved each student \$50.00 as opposed to Lamrock's estimated \$305, it is still worth the four dollar membership fee.

Of course, there are problems with CFS, but withdrawing from the organization will not solve these problems, nor will it help the UNB Student Union's position as an effective lobbying group. CFS is a relatively new organization and I don't think change is impossible. I don't think any organization of CFS's size can keep everyone happy all the time. But, that's part of the unthankful job of politics.

And what if you don't think the small sum of four dollars is worth having a national organization lobby for better student loans or trying to keep our employment center on campus? Well, Student at Large representative Jon Lazar mentioned at the council meeting that he gets his four bucks worth out of CFS every time he gets a reduced price on his haircut with his CFS student saver card. It may seem like a moot point, but CFS does offer some services to each student which we all should try to use, not only to benefit CFS, but also ourselves.

There is still hope. Council's decision on holding a foolish referendum will not occur until next year and apparently next year's council is not bound to do what this year's council has decided. Let's hope that next year's council will look at the situation with a bit more seriousness and perhaps hold more enthusiasm over the many services CFS offers and the many services they could offer with a little help from those organizations who originally said yes to CFS.

While many councillors were involved in this heated CFS debate at council on Wednesday night I noticed James van Raalte, VP Finance had very little to say. Not that I am complaining. Watching him vigorously chew his bubble gum and blow bubbles was very entertaining when the debate turned dry and boring. But I was grateful I was not sitting close to him. His smacking must be intolerable.

OPINION

The opinions found in Opinion are not necessarily the views of The Brunswickan

The power for change is in our hands

by Ira Rabinovitch

What if you had it in your power to go back in time and prevent a tragedy or a loss to stand up to someone who hurt you or a friend real bad, or to change something you did so you or someone wouldn't get hurt and live to regret it so much like you do now? To have avoided those abuses, as well as the defeats and moments of embarrassing weakness, all the regrets that deaden our capacity for giving a shit and doing something about it, for caring and moral courage now, that make us say, "to hell with it! I've got my own ass to worry about!" So often, now?

Well we do! Of course we do! We have the power right now every day every moment with every word and action we are making it happen. Our memories and our futures, our lives and realities and the way we feel about it all.

So, what the hell are we talking about here? Well, hate to bring you down, but it's just about the earth and the kids most of us plan on having some day. Don't we need to think of those who come next? What happens when your beautiful, great child asks you why he and most of his friends have strange cancers? We must realize our incredible importance. Everything we do and say from the minute we get up in the morning 'til we go to bed at night has an impact on the way we, and those around us, feel. Everything we use and everything we throw away has an impact on the planet. Everything we take in to, and do with our bodies has an impact on our well-being. So do something you believe in and get involved with stuff you care about. Work towards getting a job you can feel proud of an fulfilled by. Know full well the entire positive effect your work is having on this world, including your own self. Don't waste your precious life on feeding selfish addictions to luxury, consumption, convenience and garbage. Please! C'mon! Give your deepest happiness a fighting chance. Cut down on those pop-drug products of massive slavery and rampant earth poisoning that keep our head on the silly surface: caffiene, sugar, salt and grease-meat. Change that fake lighting and get more real air. Consume less! Buy less (and locally) use less! throw-out less! Social value is not in having. Possessions don't make a statement about who we are and products have nothing to do with our identity. We define ourselves by what we say, know and believe. Our "image" is in what we think. Our self-esteem is in how honestly we feel! Ignore all commercials! Make your own T.V. shows - or hey, be a genius artist! Or even jump around the hills and trees like a wild beast! Turn away from the superficial and artificial, from waste and greed, from consumerism and convenience from the disposable and over-packaged to courage, wealth, independence, nature, individuality, joy, community freedom and caring. Even the most selfish among us dream of a future with some pretty nature and clean resort beaches.

Still don't know what the hell we're talking about? For instance, try using a blue box, or is it too much trouble saving a planet and our children's children's skin, eyes, lungs and other organs. Write letters to your government. We needs laws to protect life and not profit. Get involved with a local group for even a little time each week. Such sacrifices we must make just so the words "fish" or "air" have any meaning at all to our grand-children. And what about all the garbage in the cafeteria (and I don't mean just the food!) Demand washable plates and cups etc. Demand from the government returnable bottles and case from the store (like other provinces!) To hell with this disposable life on the edge of one big oozing landfill. We need to develop solar power (close down deadly nuclear power! they're building another one near here and a nuclear waste dump, with no public input at all!) Conserve energy, and insulate homes and businesses! Natural gas now! Restrict car use immediately (car pool and develop electric and methanol powered cars already started). Don't drive yourself (except with many passengers to go far) use a bike (at least from March - Nov). Cut down packaging, ban (don't use) juice boxes, disposable diapers, plastic boxes and wraps for prepared food. Have a (rapidly increasing) minimal requirement for recycled fibers in paper. Make laws to reuse building materials (unbelievable amount of usable stuff is trashed). Our governments give so much of our tax dollars to road building, nuclear power plants, landfills and incinerators, useless military junk, pulp mills, mines and car-part factories and huge tax allowances to huge corporations. How many more jobs (and more profits too) could be created in our own recycling plants; in solar power (development, construction, installation, and maintenance) in alternative fuel and electric engine factories, etc.

At least use your blue box and buy locally and less instant garbage and drive less please.