

MUGWUMP

by Allan Carter

The Lady Dunn residents raised \$3000 for the Women of Transition House (in Fredericton) recently by holding a twenty four hour dance a thon. And just last weekend, residents from Bridges braved the cold waters of the Saint John river to hold a polar dip to raise money for the Fredericton Food Bank. I'm not sure exactly how much was raised at the Polar Dip, but apparently it was the best turnout they have had yet. It is obvious that these events are admirable and worthwhile. Each year quite a few residences hold various events for a good cause. However, I did not mention these two events to inform you of their worth. Rather, the reason I made the above comments was for one person: D. J. Eckenrode. Eckenrode, who is a regular contributor to the Brunswickan (Well, this is what I think, Spectrum), is searching for "nice things" for his column. He has suggested that readers submit suggestions to the Bruns. Well, that is a quaint idea, however I would suggest that Eckenrode does not have to look any farther than our campus residences to discover something nice to write about.

The staff at the ERTW should be worried. At least one artsie has found their last issue interesting. The ERTW ran a special article consisting of women's personal stories about their experiences in engineering faculties. Another interesting part of the ERTW's latest issue was the controversy over George Youssef's, the EUS President, involvement in a contest which was held where he won the grand prize: a fridge. Many of the students are upset that as an executive member Youssef even entered the contest. There is also a rumor that the contest may have been rigged. Well, it is only rumor. I can understand people's frustration over having an executive member win the grand prize in a contest where the EUS was giving away the prizes, however, I wonder if all the fuss over it is really that important. I mean he won a fridge (an ugly one, if you ask me). Are fridges a scarce commodity among engineering students. Hell, I'm sure most of them could build one if they wanted too. Then again, I suppose it is the principle of the thing. Anyhow, Youssef claims that the fridge is staying in the executive's office permanently. That's a good idea, maybe they could use it again in next year's contest.

For those of you who are interested, I moved last week (who cares, Allan). I really like the new place, but there is one problem: cats (noooo, really?). My new roommate has two cats (isn't that nice). They are older cats unlike the kittens I lived with before and I have made up names for my new friends: Sookie cat and Psycho cat. Sookie cat is, for the most part, a nice cat. She doesn't sleep in my bed, she does not get up on kitchen tables and she likes the same television shows that I do. The only bad thing about Sookie cat is fur balls - she throws them up. Now, Psycho cat does not throw up fur balls. If Psycho cat threw up anything it would probably be the remains of a Doberman Pinscher. This is a cat which has a defensive instinct that never turns off. My first encounter with Psycho cat went like this: I put out my hand and said "nice kitty", Psycho cat's eyes bulged out, it hissed, and spat. However, things have improved. Now I can actually walk by Psycho cat and all he does is growl. The other evening while I was in bed, half asleep, I heard something walking across the lower part of the bed. Thinking it was Sookie cat I stretched out my hand to pet her. Something hissed and scattered off the bed. Trembling, I turned on my lamp and looked around the room. Sookie cat was lying on my desk chair beside my bed, she was fast asleep and purring quietly. Psycho cat was no where to be seen. For a while I sat up in the bed, waiting. Finally, I turned off the light and laid down. As a lay there that evening I wondered if this is how people who are on a safari feel. Anyway, just the other day, Psycho cat decided I was going to share my breakfast with him. As he sucked back milk and Shreddies I thought that finally we were making progress. I thought that this was the moment of true cat and man bonding. But when he finished the cereal, he looked at me, burped and then slinked off to terrorize some poor dog.

A few comments involving John Teskey, head of libraries, in this column last week offended a number of individuals. When I wrote the passage I never intended to offend anyone. Nevertheless, in hindsight, I understand how my comments could be upsetting. To these people I apologize and assure you that I spoke to Mr. Teskey to apologize and also to ensure that he realizes my intentions were to not question his capabilities as head of libraries or make light of his position. Instead, I only wished to and attempted to write a humorous piece in which a prominent figure's choice of dress is depicted in a comical manner. Unfortunately, for some readers, I failed in that attempt and I only hope you will accept my apology. And if it is any consolation, I would like to point out that I certainly am no fashion expert or "fashion statement".

Next week: A UNB Student Union councillor's goals and achievements at UNB.

OPINION

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

Stand up, guys

by Brian MacDonald

Last term the Brunswickan's Editor-in-Chief, Lynne Wanyeki, wrote an editorial espousing the virtues of censorship. It basically said that if she found something offensive, she didn't have to print it. This is, of course, her right as editor, but she has set an unhealthy precedent by printing the Wimmin's Room column in the February 7th issue of the Brunswickan. I am aware that many people, a lot of them women, have found this column offensive in the past, but the pointless hate-mongering of "Flame's" latest piece overstepped not only the bounds of civility but those of good tastes as well.

The column, entitled "On receiving a joke from God," starts innocently enough. Flame tells us not to be fooled; the woman's lot in life hasn't improved over the years. Disregard the fact that there are more crisis centers, more rape information sessions (for men and women), and more women in positions of power than ever before. Ignore the fact that sexual harassment, as defined by any reasonable woman, has been made illegal. In today's society, an innocent man can be ruined by the mere suggestion of sexual misconduct; women certainly have the power to accuse. Without evidence to support their cases, the accusers of Clarence Thomas and of William Smith destroyed the reputations of those two men. The very fact that many readers of this letter are shouting, "How dare he say such things about those poor women! They were victims!" proves my point. Both men were found not guilty. If we assume that they are guilty regardless of the jury's verdict, why put them on trial? I'm sure a couple of lynching would have saved a lot in legal fees. Nonetheless, I can suspend disbelief and agree that women are as powerless as they were a generation ago.

She goes on to tell us how angry she is at campus wife batterers. This may be her only point with which I agree, so I won't discuss it here. But she continues, now talk about the Tyson rape case, wondering how he could do such a thing. Tyson may have been found guilty, but her article was submitted long before a verdict was reached. We cannot go on assuming guilt before it's proven or we'll wind up with a McCarthy-esque witch hunt on our hands. In this case, as above, perhaps a lynching would have saved some trouble.

Flame's stories of her battles against discrimination are inspiring until she tells us that she was "ready to strangle any male foolish enough to cross me." The Women's movement, at its inception, fought for equality of the sexes. At UNB, at least, the focus seems to have shifted from women's rights to the defamation and degradation of men. Many readers of the Wimmin's Room will attest to this. Could this be why so little has changed?

Then, on a stairwell in Head Hall, she meets "two large, well-built engineering students." How can a crusader against beauty pageants describe anyone simply as well-built? Would she allow her son to describe women that way? If so, she does little to advance her cause, if indeed she has a cause. How can we take her seriously? she calls one of the men a "pig," and then imagines him "naked, sweaty, squirming..." She eavesdrops on their conversation and concludes that "men are such sluts."

Finally, she discovers that the men were discussing childbirth. She laughs that she has found that these two "New Age men." Possibly she doesn't realize that men have been discussing the joys (and pains) of becoming a father since the birth of language. New Age men, indeed. They're simply men who don't fit in with her misconceptions about what men are. While fighting against sweeping generalizations about women, Flame makes the same ones about men. When she meets these two who don't fit her stereotype, she deems them the exceptions that prove the rule, "jokes for God."

Is it any wonder that Robert Bly's movement has such a following? In a society that condones such hate literature, while condemning the other viewpoint, a men's coalition is sorely needed. How can we stand up to such discrimination by an organized group like the UNB women's collective until we become organized? Or are we content to sit back and let bigots and hypocrites rob us of our pride and our dignity? Maybe this letter will spark debate. Perhaps these "wimmin" will become more tolerant. Probably not.

The writers of the Wimmin's Room have told men that we are responsible for mankind's fall from grace in the Book of Genesis, that we are responsible for all of the world's problems, that we are incapable of forming true friendships. As a group, we have been accused of murder and rape, yet we take the abuse, hoping that it will pass, that the hatred will abate. It won't. Unfortunately, it seems that many of the more vocal women are bigots. As men, we have to stop sitting back and taking the abuse; we have to do something about it, or it will never end. Stand up, guys. Make yourselves heard.