

EDITORIAL

Delinquent councillors

Kwame Dawes

Student elections take place next week Tuesday, March 26. A new batch of hopefuls are strutting their stuff around the campus and doing a royally painful job of defying building regulations by plastering their posters all over the "painted areas". After the hoopla, a number of them, something like 26, will become councillors that will be committing several hours of their time every week to attending Council meetings and to discuss issues that relate to our well-being. This, of course is the hope. Invariably, some councillors will devote more than the minimum two to three hours a week that one expects them to sacrifice for meetings, and will find themselves expending a great deal of time and energy working on behalf of their constituents, but, if the record is anything to go by, a large percentage of councillors will not even attend Council meetings on a regular basis. If this year is anything to go by, many of these delinquent councillors will manage to do this without as much as a rap on the knuckles for poor behaviour.

According to a report on Councillors Records of Attendance prepared by Union Chair, Mike Comeau in February of this year, some thirteen councillors had missed more than three meetings which made them eligible for "dismissal proceedings" in the event that they are without "reasonable excuse." Of this number five had missed more than five of the seventeen meetings held; two had missed thirteen; and three had missed all seventeen. None of these councillors have been dismissed, so it seems they all had "reasonable" excuses. Some of the excuses listed included, "wed. eve. job 1st term", "wed eve class 2nd term," and "commitment to Woodsman's competitions." These were termed "scheduling conflicts" and it remains unclear whether they were deemed as reasonable excuses. There is no question that these councillors remain in their position to this day.

Something is fundamentally wrong with a council that fails to take severe action against its delinquent councillors. It would seem to me that if a student elects to run for Student Government and to represent other students, they should be prepared to at least attend the most important meetings at which policy making decisions are made. If they can't attend these meetings, they should seriously consider stepping down from their positions.

What is more appalling is the fact that following the first term of absences only four councillors had their honoraria withheld. These included (according to the report) councillors Borden, Keirstead, Reid and Currie, who were absent for an average of fifteen meetings. On the other hand, councillors Jenkins(7), Casey (6), Rocca (17), and Savoie (14) received full honoraria at the end of the year despite the fact that they were all, at the time, "subject to dismissal proceedings for missing more than three(3) regular meetings of the Council." It is clear that SU Chair Comeau was not very happy with the situation, prompting him to prepare the report. It appears that very little was done about it. After the report was presented it was "recognized" and no direct action was taken. Perhaps the councillors in question were warned, but this seems totally inadequate.

Now, while we would regard it as grossly unfair and impractical to regard attendance at council meetings as the basis on which the honoraria schedule is decided, it must be accepted that for many councillors, attendance at these meetings constitutes the bulk of their activities as student leaders. It seems reasonable to this writer, anyway, to see the attitude of councillors to Council Meetings as an important indicator of their attitude to the position they hold. We understand that the proposed honouraria schedule for next year will include a clause that ties the payment of honoraria to attendance. We hope that this is approved by Council and we hope that it will go some way in deterring delinquency among councillors. However, it will not be enough. There will have to come a point at which dismissals take place. Councillors commit themselves to a job, they should live by these commitments if they are to remain responsible to their constituents.

Election theory

It has been brought to our attention that there is a very basic, even if questionable way in which one may predict who will win the president's position during student elections. According to the theory students vote for the candidates whose names appear earliest in the alphabet. The rationale is that students are so uninformed about the candidates that they have to select from that they simply guess or select the first name on the list. Not a very encouraging assessment of UNB students. One expects that this is merely a joke and that students will vote with consideration.

Celebrating 125 years

This week *The Brunswickan* has published a short supplement celebrating 125 years of publication. The overview of the paper's history is in no way comprehensive but the exercise of digging through old Brunies to discover something about the paper's history and the history of the University has granted a certain perspective to Brunswickan staffers which will be invaluable in the future. The more one reads old papers, the more one is convinced that very fruitful and informative studies can be done on certain important eras in UNB's history. I still long for the individual who is willing to dig into the first seven years of the nineteen eighties which represent an important watershed in the development of student government at UNB. Any takers?

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
Assistant News Editor Karen Burgess
Business Manager Josée Guidry
Co-Sports Editor Kelly Craig
Co-Sports Editor Frank Denis
Entertainment Editor Sean Malley
Co-Features Editor Chris Lohr
Co-Features Editor Chantal Richard
Offest Editor Jamie Rowan
Distractions Editor Jayde Mockler
Photo Editor Dave Smith
Advertising Manager Tara Froning
Advertising Design Lori Durley

STAFF THIS ISSUE

Pamela Fulton, Enyinda Okey, Trisha Graves, Karen Burgess, Aime Phillips, Mimi Cormier, Randy Goodleaf, Leigh Acheson, Andrew Hunt, Paul Arsenault, Murray Nystrom, Nancy Washburn, Terry Richard, John Valk, Rick Fisher, Murray Carew, Ted Chamberlin, David Smith, Al Robichaud, Al S Tare, Bill Traer, Mark Savoie, Luis Cardoso, Chris Hunt, Paul Campbell, Mr. Press Release, Bill Montan, Eric Drummie, Edison Stewart, Jackie Webster, Susan Manzer-Morell

Typists Extraordinaire:

*Denise Holloway, 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.

