

Editorial Mary Rogal-Black

"...please put brain in gear before taking foot off brake..."

If I were in the habit of giving out gold stars, this week's award would go to Engineering Representative Darren Thompson, who seemed to me to be one of the few voices of reason at this week's council meeting. During a debate about whether CHSR-FM serves the needs of the majority of students at UNB, Thompson said, "If you put the question out to students, 'Do we need a Student Union?' a lot of students would say no."

The issue he identified is one that goes unnoticed far too often: do we hold ourselves up to the same standards that we expect others to live up to? For councilors and VPs who argue that CHSR - with a yearly price tag of \$70,000 and a chronic inability to engage students - is not doing good enough, the answer is no. The Student Union - with a cost to students of ten times the amount CHSR spends and the same apathetic response from the students it's serving - might be expected to have more sympathy and patience with its radio station.

But this phenomenon doesn't just fester in your friendly student council; it's much more widespread. Consider the difficulty First Nations people have convincing other Canadians of their need for self-government. Most Canadians take their autonomy - based on a system of government developed out of our own cultural and religious heritage - for granted. What would happen if someone came along and tried to usurp our self-government, beginning with our school systems and our land and then adding insult to injury by blaming us for the difficulty we had surviving in a culture we didn't ask for and don't believe in? I think we'd be pissed. And yet many will argue that the problems First Nations people have, including unemployment, alcoholism and suicide rates well above the national average, are their own problems. It's a double standard that we take for granted too often.

Social psychologists have identified the problem: although most individuals judge their own actions based on a wealth of knowledge about the factors affecting them at any given moment, they often judge the actions of others based only on a few superficial factors they know or can only guess at. For example,

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man ... who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming ... who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."
- Unknown

you may be driving down the street looking for an unfamiliar address. When you spot it, you slow down suddenly to pull into the driveway without signalling. The driver behind you honks loudly and gives you the finger after almost rear-ending you. You think it was a close call but no harm done and are upset that the other driver overreacted. You conclude that they must be an overly hostile idiot. While it's possible that you're right, it's also possible that they are normally quiet and respectful, but have had a hard day and your innocent mistake just plucked their last nerve. Or maybe they recently had a bad accident in a similar situation and are automatically reacting emotionally to the scare you just gave them. The point is, just as you know there was a good explanation for your slightly careless driving and can excuse yourself for that, you should be prepared to recognise that other people have reasons for their behaviour, too. Instead, though, many people assume that the actions of others are simply a direct response to them - the only reason you should be unhappy is because I made you that way - a pretty self-centred assumption.

This problem affects all aspects of our social lives, from personal social interaction to government's social policy. I'd like to be understanding and say that most people don't have time to educate themselves fully about the things they pass judgement on. It's true that we often have to make decisions based on as much information available at the time or even trust our intuition. But I don't think that right now there is even minimal recognition of how shortsighted it is to pass judgement on something you really know nothing about - and how resentful you are when someone does the same to you. An understanding of this fact and a willingness to admit that you don't have all the answers could be an important part of how we interact with others if we want it to be.

The Church needs the university

For the Church to carry out its mission and mandate, it needs the university. This sounds rather odd. Has the university not done much to undermine, trivialize and ridicule religion, especially the Church?

For almost a century educated elites dismissed religion as childish, irrational and even harmful. They included within their purview a vast assortment of religious beliefs. They even insisted that "God is dead," and predicted religion's eventual demise and disappearance, in favour of a firmer faith in reason, science and technology.

This has not, however, taken place. Reason, science and technology do not seem capable of nurturing the human spirit. And so religion has not disappeared. In fact, the reverse has happened: "God is alive and well." Not God as a "tyrannical and invincible, irrational, supernatural brute," but as a loving Creator and Redeemer intimately concerned with humans.

An increasing number of people have moved away from the truncated notion of religion dished out earlier by atheists and agnostics. They are discovering warmer, deeper, and more profound expressions of religious beliefs. These beliefs, which may or may not lead to the churches, nonetheless will "help us

move with trust, hope and caring for one another into the next millennium (Margaret Somerville, "Why are atheists so passionate about disbelief?" *Globe and Mail*, Nov. 16/96).

That "trust, hope and caring for one another" forms part of the mandate and mission of the Church. Jesus gave us a Great Commandment: "love God and love our neighbour." For the Church to live in the spirit of this Great Commandment in an increasingly complex world requires not only people with passionate hearts but also with perceptive minds.

Perceptive minds are not exclusive to the university, nor to university educated people. But the university does exist to nurture and challenge perceptive minds. It opens the mind's eye to the world; its amazing wonders and myriad nuances. It also helps those minds find solutions to difficult and nagging problems in our world: "our concern for others far and near."

We do not so readily associate university education with active involvement in the Church. These two institutions are, more often than not, perceived to be operating in conflict rather than in concert. But ought this be so? No doubt each has its own unique mandate, but do they not exist



in some kind of mutual or symbiotic relationship? Does not each depend, and benefit, from the other? It is my sense that the Church, for one, benefits greatly from the university.

In the past the Church has had a close relationship with the university. Most of the major universities in this country were established by churches. Higher education has always been deemed essential to equip or train people to engage in the affairs of this world, "in the spirit of the Lord."

Secularism has dispatched religion to the private realm. But increasingly many recognize that the privatization of religion is impossible. Religious beliefs define who we are, and what we do.

A university education, and the skills gained from it, not only helps us understand who we are, but assists us as we engage in the affairs of this world. This is also of great interest to the Church. Does the university then not assist the Church in its mission?

Most clergy have a university education. Further, individuals educated in the humanities, social work, nursing,

and engineering are involved in outreach programmes: "love of neighbour." Individuals educated in the arts, counselling, teaching and accounting are involved in programmes intended to maintain and build a local church.

A university education also assists church members in assessing the religious beliefs they hold. The church need not fear this. After all, God gave us perceptive, imaginative, creative and inquiring minds for a purpose. Higher education may deepen and help one articulate their beliefs. It may also help one understand what it means to be the Church in the modern world.

Education is not solely for the purposes of securing a job. Education is for discerning who we are, how we are to relate to others, and how we are to deal with the nagging problems we face in our society and world. If these matters are also of concern to the Church, then university and Church ought to work in concert. Ought they be partners?

Forest Breeze

Recently, I was inquiring in the undergraduate forestry lounge about some things regarding the annual Woodsmen's Competition, when someone uttered the words that I selected as the title for this article. Like it or not, attitudes are changing and I was frustrated to hear this comment once again.

To begin, I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management. I graduated from the Faculty in 1994 and have worked as a field research technician in northern New Brunswick and in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta. After doing a lot of thinking during this employment period and searching for a potential supervisor for graduate studies, I decided to return to UNB for graduate work. I have been asked to loosely focus on the question of "How does forest landscape spatial pattern influence wildlife community structure?"

Much of our focus in the Wildlife and Forested Landscape Lab is directed at community level (multiple species) questions. We look at communities because, to borrow an explanation or two from my supervisor, we feel that "all management decisions are trade offs because what is a 'best' decision for one

species is not necessarily 'best' for another species." This means that in making a decision about what to do on the ground, a forest company may be making a "good" intervention for some species and an unfavorable one for others. When we refer to species, we usually mean birds and mammals and although our primary focus is on these species, the community justification may be applicable to a broader range of species. Consequently, it is impossible to manage for all species separately.

What is spatial pattern and why look at this? We refer to spatial pattern as the size, shape and juxtaposition of different patches in a given area. One example would be a mosaic of forest stands. For instance, pattern could refer to some larger scale of measure; some aggregate of similar forest stands or watershed boundaries. We believe that "to manage at large scale, we should aim to manage ecological processes. Our premise is that landscape pattern drives ecological processes which in turn determine the nature of communities."

Because animals move and make decisions on where to go based on what they encounter and where it exists - the pattern of forest they see fit to afford them of food, water, shelter or all of the above - a relationship exists between

where they go and how we change what they are encountering by timber harvesting actions.

I have the challenge of investigating further how our actions on the ground affect the communities of birds and mammals found in our forest. But I'm not only concerned with just these species, I'm also concerned with all of the management process. There is a necessity to do things better than we are doing and not manage for timber and only timber.

So it seems to me that I am an "everything-er," and not just a wildlifer. Certainly it could be argued that we don't know how to manage everything in a forest, but this is not cause for reducing the management question to timber. We need to devise ways of going beyond the simple excuse that we do not know enough.

We now know much about how various biological processes work. We know something about ecological processes as well. The "system" seems to operate around us and with us in it. Why not investigate how we may better fit into that system of processes functioning in the forest? If you were to come to me and ask about those same processes and systems, I guarantee that I would not be able to answer all of

"Oh, you darn Wildlifers"

your inquiries. I have as much to find out about these topics as many other people in Forestry and Environmental Management. But from what I do know, it seems more intuitive to tackle the question looking at the whole, instead of continuing to manipulate the parts.

Thus, I would like to see the actual practise of timber management in this and other provinces evolve to forest management. We practise timber management because we are still striving to practise forest management. With forest management, we should be considering all of the parts, the whole system. We have not to date.

So the next time someone spouts, "oh, those darn wildlifers," maybe you will have a better foundation to take them to task and point out that we aren't just wildlifers, but people concerned with making the whole process a better one.

If you would like to chat about anything I have stated in this article, I invite you stop by NF 219 and take me up on a conversation. It might be a great chance for us all to learn.

Jonathan Kierstead works in the Wildlife and Forested Landscape Laboratory.

Mudwump

Joseph W.J. FitzPatrick

A situation has come to the fore (once again) that gives students some insight into the priorities of the UNB Student Union.

The UNB Student Union Bursary has languished since 1992, unused. The UNB Student Union Scholarship, however, has flourished, making 10 awards totalling \$5000 since 1991.

The difference between these two awards is stark. So sharply divergent, in fact, that there can be only one conclusion: the SU has set its own interests before those of the students it purports to represent.

How can this conclusion be made? Let's look at how the two awards are given, and why.

The bursary is awarded by the University (from money the SU donated in 1992) "on the basis of financial need, to a member of the Student Union (i.e. paid the student activity fee), who has completed the normal requirements for the first year of the program in which the student is registered." (UNB Calendar, 1996-97)

The scholarship has no written description. It is awarded by the SU Council on recommendation of the Awards Committee, headed by Vice-President Student Services. Despite what current VPS (Trish Davidson) claims, it has been awarded only to students closely involved in the SU. Financial need, though it may have been a consideration, is demonstrably far from the main criterion. When a Beaverbrook scholar, with a \$5,000 renewable scholarship, employed by the SU the previous summer, and receiving an honouraria that year was given such an award, there can be no other conclusion.

So, one award is made to students in financial need, another to SU insiders. Still not convinced there is a problem? Let's look at how they were financed:

The bursary cost the SU \$11,000 in 1992. As a result of a jump in enrollment the SU had a \$25,000 surplus and \$11,000 from that surplus was donated to UNB in the form of the UNB Student Union bursary.

The scholarship was started a year earlier, in 1991, with \$4,500 from the SU budget going towards its creation. Since 1991, a total of \$28,000 has

been invested in the scholarship fund. The fund balance is \$32,008. This year's SU budget calls for \$7,040 to be added to that fund this year, bringing the total to just over \$39,000. Okay, one cost \$11,000 from a surplus, the other \$28,000 from the bottom line. Don't think this is such a bad problem? Let's look at how well the SU has administered its Scholarship Fund:

Since its inception, the Scholarship Fund has been separated from its budget. You may think that it has been invested, and has been generating interest. Too bad.

Apparently, nobody was able to find a place to invest for more than 2% last year. And, even with \$32,008, the SU apparently can't find some place to pay more than the 3.1% it would require to make the fund self-sufficient.

To the uninitiated investor this may seem possible. After all, interest rates are at the lowest level in 40 years. But wait, and please forgive me for suggesting this, but why not lend some money to Jean Chrétien? Any investor knows that the Bank of Canada offers low-interest ways to get money to Canadian Treasury like Savings Bonds and Treasury Bills. However, they are 100% guaranteed and have a wide variety of terms, from 30 days to 30 years.

A six-month Treasury Bill (known as a T-Bill) can earn you 4.99%. Even month-to-month, you can expect to earn 3.65%-4.75% this year. Something as unimaginative as a savings bond would have earned 5.2% last year, yet the SU was able to raise only 2%. What are we, a dairy? Wake up! A checking account is not a place to invest money!

In five years, the SU has managed to generate a 4% return, 2.6% per year. Savings Bonds generated nearly 19% at the same time, 3.6% annually. And before you think I'm just criticising for criticiser's sake, here's a way to save \$6,000 this year. Pay this year's \$10,000 award out of the budget, don't make the \$7,000 investment into the fund called for in the Budget, and invest the \$32,000 principle more effectively. Conveniently, Savings Bonds are on sale now with a 6-year term. You can cash them

anytime, and they have a schedule of minimum interest rates for the next decade which would allow the fund to make a \$10,000 award every year, with \$10,000 to spare.

There's something almost dirty about a student in financial need waiting six years before the Bursary Fund will have enough money to make an award while a dirty dozen will have received \$6,000 for involving themselves with the Union.

It's bad enough that the SU has left \$11,000 to rot away in UNB coffers while students who might apply for some of that \$11,000 have to pay to give \$1,000 to a deserving SU volunteer. But it's even worse now that when the Fund could be self-sufficient, the SU continues to rob from those very students the bursary could help.

How many more tens of thousands of student dollars will the SU put into this sinking fund? How much longer will the SU let that bursary fund wallow in the UNB coffers?

Adding insult to injury, last year's Vice-President (Finance & Administration) Duncan Fulton never did anything about it. Worse still, it doesn't appear anything is going to be done about it this year. Though, for some reason, I expect it will come up at Council next week. I guess I must be psychic.

Here's some advice to our intrepid VP Finance: take every penny out of the scholarship fund and make a donation to the UNB Student Union Bursary, then, take a closer look at the pattern of money the SU throws around and maybe spend a little less time counting how many unauthorized \$3 phone calls CHSR made. You may find some ways to save the SU some real money or do some good with the money you have.

I ask you, in all sincerity, doesn't it strike you as foolish to invest \$28,000 to make a \$10,000 award, when the SU already awards \$60,000 in honouraria? Why not just increase expenditures by \$1,000?

But, you say, it's not the money, it's the principle. Precisely. There's one \$32,008 principle wasting away in the SU chequing account, and another one of \$11,000 wasting away in UNB coffers.



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This issue is dedicated to:

Scotland: good people come and go but the aftertaste of haggis lasts forever.

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