

# Lack of communication surfaces in bar closure

As everyone knows by now the residence bars will be closed permanently effective April 5, 1981. According to Dean of Men's Residences Robert Smith, it was decided to close the bars because "the regulations governing the operation of house bars have been and continue to be, flagrantly violated." Smith had the active support of the house dons who helped initiate the action. According to Smith "the Dons concede that attitudes and conditions are such that they cannot maintain sufficient control to ensure that the regulations are enforced." Since neither the dons nor Smith have provided any information to support their action it is difficult to evaluate the accuracy of their remarks. If the situation is as bad as they describe it then their action in closing the bars is certainly justified.

No doubt the closing of the residence bars will detract from the quality of life to be enjoyed in the residences. The responsibility for that closing, however, has to rest with the members of the residences. No person or group has a right to operate a bar for profit or otherwise. It is a privilege which carries with it a responsibility to observe the regulations, maintain order and police the operation. By failing to fulfill those responsibilities the residence members lost their privileges. They have only themselves to blame.

The argument has been advanced by the various house presidents that because of a lack of communication on the part of Dean Smith, those running the bars were not sure as to what was expected of them. This argument evades the point that they had a responsibility to find out what was expected of them. While a lack of communication involve-

ment on the part of Smith or the dons is lamentable, it does not excuse those in charge of the operations of the bars from that responsibility. It is difficult to believe that they couldn't have obtained the information somewhere.

It is unfortunate of course that such a vacuum

of information should exist in the residence system. The presidents of Neville, Jones, Bridges, and Aitken Houses all expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction with the quality of communication offered by Smith. SRC President Kevin Ratcliff has echoed their com-

plaints. Ratcliff has found Smith "unwilling to communicate with the students" and "most uncooperative with the press."

It can be said the house presidents are trying to shift the blame for the situation onto Dean Smith and away from themselves. A scapegoat as it were. It can also be said that Kevin Ratcliff has his own axe to grind with Smith. It was Smith who ordered Ratcliff's expulsion from Jones House last fall. No doubt his opinion is slightly prejudiced.

Ratcliff certainly made a point, however, when he stated that Smith was "most uncooperative with the press's attempts to glean information." When approached by the Brunswickan, Smith refused to comment or answer questions on the situation. He claimed his release was self-explanatory. The possibility that UNB students might have questions of their own or that they might have a right to have those questions answered does not seem to concern him.

The situation is an unfortunate one. No attempt should be made to pass the responsibility for the closing of the bars away from the members of the residence system. They had the opportunity to show that they could handle the responsibility and they failed. Repeatedly. The decision to close the bars is clearly justified.

It also seems obvious, however, that Dean Smith has failed in his responsibilities. Surely the position of dean of men's residences requires that the holder of that office communicate with the leaders of the residence system as well as the SRC and the media on campus. If Smith is not willing to fulfill that requirement then the time has come to find someone who will.



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