

MUGWUMP JOURNAL

by Melanie R. Hawkes

Didn't this week seem short?

I think the idea of a four-day week with a break on Tuesdays is a great idea. We should do it every week. How 'bout changing the day off to a Wednesday to make the number of work days more even.

One disadvantage, though. In some classes we are required to have a make-up class on Saturday morning. Is this fair? It's not the student's fault that there was a snow storm. What student is able to get up on a Saturday morning at 9 am? Of course it will most probably be this material covered on Saturday, which will be life threatening in the course mid-term!!

Ever have a really bad itch on your nose you just have to scratch it; no matter how strange it looks? Well, just imagine if you couldn't scratch it; that you were paralyzed and couldn't do a thing about it. It's more annoying and painful than you realize.

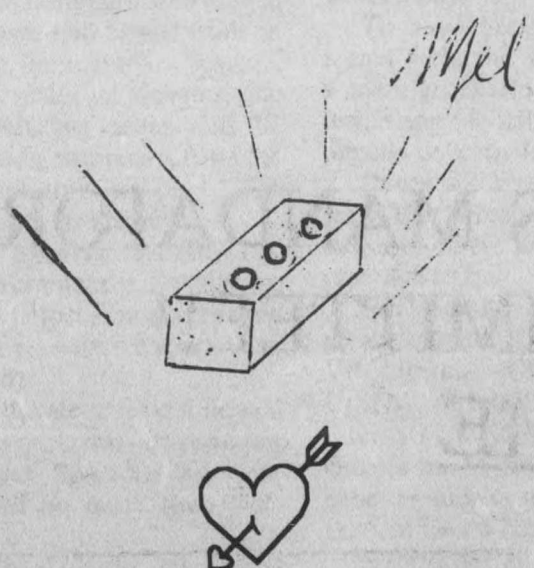
So was our Winter Carnival a success this year? Well, they certainly didn't lose any money on the events. And 100% more people at least knew there was a winter carnival this year. How much did the piggy bank sculpture win anyway? One cent??

I must admit, that Varsity Hockey game UNB vs. STU, last Saturday was definitely one of the most exciting hockey games I've ever seen (then again how many hockey games has an Australian resident seen?). Games into overtime are always the most exciting. And there was a bonus for my boyfriend. He was one of the lucky ones who got hit by a puck!!

Once again I see a mass of chain letter in Blood & Thunder in response to two people's view (about teachers as role models and homosexuality). Some comments certainly strike a live nerve in many people.

A rose or a brick?? That's the choice you can make to send to a loved one this year for Valentines day. And don't forget your singing telegram from AIESEC. Now what a choice to have to make. I hope they have strong deliverers lined up for this event.

So long till next time.



OPINION...

IN DEFENSE OF ACADEMIA OR "PISS OFF, PUXLEY"

by Luis Cardosa

I have been disturbed recently by the number of letters to the editor of the Brunswickan, and the amount of attention directed toward UNB from those outside of the university community, especially since the Prof. Barry Davies "scandal". The reaction from Frederictonians has been one of shock and disbelief; indeed, this "scandal" has only served to confirm what they have suspected about academic types all along.

In last week's Brunswickan, Simon Puxley (who regularly adorns the editorial pages of the local newspaper with his vitriol) writes about widespread "crippling professorial irresponsibility" and blames the "plummeting fortunes of this country" on academia. The local media also lapped up the Davies story, knowing their listeners and watchers are hungry for morsels of scandal from the university. Their reaction has been one of self-righteous disgust. Unfortunately, Davies' students reacted in much the same way; although, predictably, now that they are guaranteed a passing grade, their self-righteous pronouncements on Davies' moral fibre have quickly ceased.

I become nervous, and justifiably so, when groups from outside academia begin to poke their noses into the happenings within universities in an attempt to root out scandal, like those pigs in France that are used to dig up truffles from deep within the soil. A few years ago certain church groups attempted to exert influence on campus radio station CHSR because they didn't like the music being played over the city's airwaves.

In much the same way Puxley, and he is only one, has used the Davies affair to attack all he fears and hates about UNB: public education about AIDS (lest his grandchildren, heaven forbid, become aware that safe sex is possible); and education that exposes anti-Semitism and other forms of racism for what they are -- not buzzwords, but tools of oppression that have been used throughout history to instill fear and loathing. In New Brunswick Malcolm Ross attempts this feat in his attack on Jews, and the C.O.R. party has done a fairly good job in stirring up violent anti-French sentiment.

How easy it is to incite anti-academic passion with stirring phrases such as "you can ... find Playboy and Penthouse from (sic) the genre of literature which some educators consider to be essential to the well-rounded conditioning of a docile, apathetic C-to-A student body," (a reference to the passing grades awarded those students in Prof. Davies course) even though the truth is that this was an isolated incident. Under closer scrutiny one would find that the "docile, apathetic C-to-A students" are the principal offenders when it comes to classroom attendance (to this fact my own undergraduate habits were a glowing tribute).

This is, unfortunately, a tactic used not exclusively by Mr. Puxley, but by all those who fear the type of education universities would give their children and grandchildren. They fear, among other things, feminism, gays and lesbians, and the new and open avenues of thinking that students are exposed to. When they finally get a whiff of scandal they pounce on the entire concept of the university.

Such fear and hostility can be expressed in a variety of ways: letters to university publications, mobilization of special interest groups to put pressure on the university to cease the action deemed offensive, and much more frighteningly, through violence, such as that expressed by Mark Lepine, whose fear and hatred of feminists and women caused him to go on a murderous rampage at a Montreal university.

It is unfortunate when society's intolerance makes a display of itself on the pages of a student publication, and it is this very question I have been leading to; that is, the extent of non-student or non-university contribution to a student publication. Should students have to wade through offensive letters by Puxley and others from without the university? Should a student publication print letter from sources outside the university community? Is it the business of anyone outside of students and faculty how the university deals with its own internal affairs, such as the handling of complaints by students concerning professors?

I think no. I don't think anyone who has not spent 4 to 5 years completing a Bachelor's degree, another 2 to 3 on a Master's degree, and a final 4 to 5 on a Ph.D., as well as years of, not only teaching, but research and publication of research, can comprehend the different rules that are set for academics by their employer (the university) than those that exist for, say, a factory worker or even an engineer working in private industry.

So while the talk at the Tim Horton's might be that of "French-Jewish-Communist-Faggot-Dykes up at the university," I don't want to read about it in my student newspaper.