

17 editorial

BY MACK MORCIAN

This week's throne speech has left a sour note in this editor's craw, namely a scapegoat's gruff.

Our very esteemed and nightly revered provincial government has found in its best interests to make fiscal responsibility a priority of theirs as well as to create jobs. It's the same rhetoric one hears all across this great land. Whether it's in lush green British Columbia, stiff-upright-armed-Mike Harris' Ontario or our kin in Newfoundland. Premier McKenna addressed what really matters to New Brunswickers and in fact, all Canadians.

In his throne speech, McKenna outlined that his Liberal "Government will undertake fundamental structural changes to the public education system, including streamlining and realigning the Department of Education and school districts." I can only compare this type of promise with that of the Harris' government in Ontario, and their intent towards healthcare and education.

From my limited BBA experience here at our fair university, the words "streamline and realign" mean "hack and slash." Can you really cut the public education system without jeopardizing the quality of education? Probably not. Instead of taking a novel approach and working with the demands and dealing with the limited resources of the education system, Frank has arbitrarily decided to harm the public education system.

Don't get me started about butchering the healthcare system. Sure, you have to admire Frank for trying to run this province like a business. But why are the two most vitally important areas of NBER's concerns on the chopping block? Clearly when a government hacks and slashes education and health, it shows their mandate is money and not people.

If a government is fair, and has the interests of the people at heart then its mandate would be running a break even form of expenditures. But seldom does a government run that way.

What this all comes down to, is the government must find convenient scapegoats for misdirecting us into debt for the past 9 years and it appears as though education, as well as healthcare, will be one of those.

What the government could really be doing is streamlining and realigning the provincial cabinet, reduce pensions or impose stricter criteria in order to receive one, increase their take on video gambling machines, and raise fines for environmental pollution.

On a lighter note:

Dean Craighead is standing by his man Don Jeff Wedge, as the fallout from the Neill House residents comes to light. Is it coincidental that a few days after this Neill mess first saw light in *The Brunswickan* that a response was issued?

Anyway to keep with a Valentine theme splattered throughout this week's issue, here's hoping you find someone to love or at least laugh with or better yet, both.

The Mugwump Journal

We will print nothing that is sexist, racist, libelous or defamatory, but anything else goes. *The Brunswickan* mantra, applicable equally to what is printed as to what is said. Notice that there is no reference to ageism, the only permissible and recurrent Brunsumism. (There may actually be more, but that wouldn't support my argument.)

As if it weren't bad enough that I'm forbidden from entering clubs (the social headquarters of university students), I'm constantly mocked for my chronological inferiority. I can't control my age any more than I can control my sex or race, so why is this a more permissible basis for teasing? I didn't choose when to be born (except I apparently delayed my arrival by a couple of weeks), nor did I choose when to be conceived, nor when my parents decided to reproduce, nor when their parents decided to reproduce... it's an ages-long conspiracy to make me younger than I want to be. I don't mean that I want to spontaneously age and miss the fun of being a teenager, just that I want society to change to accommodate me.

Why is age the determining factor in who can enter the entertainment haven that is a bar anyway? What is so definitive about age that magically prepares a person for the new atmosphere the instant the nineteenth year is entered? Why do Quebecers reach this stage a year earlier, and Germans even earlier than that? Is there no more appropriate rite of passage than surviving to midnight, x number of years after birth? My doubt in governmental wisdom extends to all age limits. What instantaneous transition occurs at 14 that enables someone to see an AA movie, at 16 to handle a car, or at 18 to vote? What happens to the financial stability of 65 year olds that they suddenly need a discount on everything? I can't say that I have a solution to any of these problems, or at least not one that would pass as law.

Certainly, the recent increase of Wet/Dry events is a good start. My proposal is that enrollment in post-secondary education be a legal equivalent to turning nineteen. (Or, we could try the movie theatre method; persons under nineteen may be admitted if accompanied by someone over nineteen.) It's not even the alcohol I'm campaigning for. (Contrary to the laws, it's not too hard to come by.) I WANT TO SING, I WANT TO DANCE! and unfortunately, the best places for these activities are the ones I'm prohibited from. I've spent enough time listening to bands from the outside, while everyone else is inside dancing and socializing (including the designated drivers and abstainers).

But, since I don't expect any major social reform to occur before my nineteenth birthday, I'll just keep dancing away by myself to the wall-muted music. At least it's a lot cheaper to be relaxed enough to dance outside than inside.

Cynthia Kirkby

Blood n' Thunder

THRONE SPEECH
1996
PRACTICE # 53



No complaints for SU Health Plan "UTTER RUBBISH"

"SU Health Plan Usage Report In Question"

In response to the usage report concerning the SU Health Plan on February 2, I laugh in disbelief. Trish Davidson, Vice-President of Student Services, reported that there had been no complaints regarding the health plan reimbursements or claim process — UTTER RUBBISH. Not only did I hear of various opt-out complaints from fellow students but was subject myself along with a friend to the opt-out chaos. Although the opt-out form had been filled out by my friend and I on September 10, we were still charged for the health plan. When I called Student Services and spoke to Davidson about the mishap I was informed that there was nothing they could do as opt-out procedures had changed on September 11th!! Apparently it had been our responsibility to file one of the slips to the comptroller office on September 10 even though NO ONE had mentioned this to us on that fateful day. No further help was offered from Student Services — we were expected to forget about the \$95 that was due to us. Unwilling to admit defeat we headed for the business office and matters were taken care of — we will be receiving our cheques later this week. In view of the whole "opt-out fiasco" I would hope that next year's procedure will be better organized and that SU executives will be more accommodating with their student body in the future.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Mallory
Jason Corneau

Lamrock writes full of hypocrisy. P.S. rejoin CFS

To the Editor

Just as Kelly Lamrock did a week before me, I was reading the student newspaper of my *alma mater*, *The Aquinian*. The difference is that, whereas Lamrock found the letter that he *read* full of hypocrisy, I found the letter that he *wrote* full of hypocrisy.

Don't get me wrong. The two students lambasted by Lamrock deserved to be. At a time when Chretien, McKenna and their corporate buddies are trying to hack education to pieces, anyone arguing to get rid of the only organization solely elected by students to represent students is clearly endowed with either a fat pocket book or an inability to see how huge of an assault on post-secondary education is under way: deregulation of tuition, massive loans, and loan-cops to weed-out the poor, are but tiny hints of things

to come. To argue that student reps shouldn't be elected to help organize against this is surely masochistic.

But everything Lamrock's done in his role, first as the head of the NBSA and now as the President of the UNBSU, has reeked of hypocrisy.

Lamrock was one of the initiators of CASA (Cdn. Alliance Of Student Associations) and moved to pull out of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), Canada's traditional national student organization, at a time when solidarity against the cuts was more necessary than ever.

The reason? Presumably the CFS got too involved in "non-student" issues, such as fights against racism, sexism and homophobia (although if you ask students who are affected by these things, they probably don't think it's a waste of time). Also, there were many accusations that the CFS was bureaucratic. I don't know about you, but when I think "bureaucrat", I think of a careerist who only sees important endless meetings with other careerists, most often far away from the people who they supposedly represent.

With this in mind, what was Lamrock's justification for trying to split the student movement? The CFS didn't lobby government enough! So, Lamrock felt that the answer to CFS' bureaucracy was to have more high-priced meetings with Liberal bureaucrats. This, my friends, is hypocrisy.

What about CFS anyway? They're not perfect, I'm sure. But they were responsible for organizing the single largest student demonstration in Canadian history last year on January 25th (80,000+ students). It was supported by a majority of all organized universities, as well as labour, anti-poverty groups, etc. Where was Lamrock? He was inside the UNB SUB actively trying to discourage students here from participating!! "It's ridiculous to miss/skip classes in order to save them," he and his cronies like Pat FitzPatrick (remember him) argued. Without worrying that such an argument was petty and attempted to obscure the seriousness of the government cuts, it does bring us to the next, most amazing bit of hypocrisy.

Lamrock has called a rally at the Legislature to protest the mounting inaccessibility of post-secondary education. This is wonderful news! I think everyone should go. Talk to your professors and get them to send your entire class down. Actions such as these can stop the cuts. But the problem remains: when a nation-wide student demo of 80,000 occurs, Lamrock actively opposed it. When he wants a platform where he's the head cheese, all the hoopla about bad students who miss their classes is surprisingly absent.

The fact is that Kelly Lamrock has seriously inhibited the ability of students to fight back in solidarity across Canada because of his arrogant, careerist political adventures. Who at UNB or STU knew about the demos all across Canada on Feb. 7th to protest

cuts to education? Almost nobody. And Lamrock had no interest in letting you know either.

The tiger has shown its stripes: a student union has seldom been as corrupt and unaccountable as Lamrock's (resignations, dismissals, botched spending, etc.). This isn't to say that there hasn't been or aren't serious, well-intentioned people on Council at UNB, but one has merely to sit in on a meeting and listen in order to find out who's running the show. If I'm mistaken, then show me: challenge the rest of Council to speak-out against CASA and begin a campaign to re-affiliate with CFS. The same goes for the STUSU. CASA is corrupt, at least the CFS fights back.

Scott Jack
STU 1987-91
International Socialists
Fredericton Branch

Why sing about assholes when you know one

I drive really slow in the ultrafast lane / While people behind me are going insane I'm an asshole
-Dennis Leary, "I'm an Asshole"

I loathe that song. Absolutely despise it. I don't even find Leary to be funny and he certainly cannot sing to save his soul. So why is it that I am rather put out by the idea that the Don of Bridges House has taken it upon himself to have that song, if not banned, restricted?

The problem is not this restricted song. The problem is that any song can be restricted. The official reason given during a house meeting on January 28th was that "several members" of the House had approached the Don claiming that they found the song offensive.

What I don't like even more is the fact that these people, in the words of the Don no more than two, have managed to get official prohibition against a song that they find offensive. If this prohibition is allowed to stand, a dangerous precedent has been set. Now there has been official acceptance of the notion that someone else can dictate what you can listen to.

What follows next? Do you ban everything that someone finds offensive?

What the issue boils down to is one of freedom of expression. Is it justifiable to limit expression under certain circumstances? Unquestionably it can be argued that it is I doubt very many would support the right of a couple to do the wild thing on a park bench beside Queen Street at lunchtime. However the limits must, in a free and democratic society be as minimal as possible and only created when there is a demonstrable need to do so. You

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