

EDITORIAL

Truth and the Information Age

by Lynne Wanyeki

One of the constants in our lives is information. We have newspapers, magazines, periodicals and newsletters, not to mention the numerous channels on our television and the many radio stations whose broadcasting accompanies our dressing, eating and driving. The flow of information is indeed so persistent that we only can fully comprehend its omnipresence in its complete absence.

Two summers ago, I went tree-planting in the rain, the heat, the June snow and the interminable bugs of Northern Ontario. We were camped out in the bush, about one hour from the nearest "town" (and I use the term "town" very loosely here). After about four weeks, it suddenly struck me that I hadn't seen a newspaper once during that time, and that I had absolutely no idea what was happening in the rest of the world. It was a very strange, almost shocking feeling, and it made me realize just how unnecessary and insignificant most of us are to the whirlwind of events and happenings that make up our daily dose of "news". For as I became aware of how much I actually needed to *know* what had happened during my "absence", I became equally aware that my own lack of knowledge had, of course, in no way at all affected what events had unfolded during that hiatus. A sobering thought - and a somewhat blunt indication of my own egotism.

But I do not believe that I am alone in that egotism. I continually find myself engaged in long and sometimes tedious debates about the state of this or that, and the force and conviction of our individual arguments can be taken as illustrations of just how important and imperative we believe our individual arguments to be. But the most a sound argument can do is change somebody else's opinion. And given the context in which most of these heated debates occur, changing somebody else's opinion is not going to affect the price of tea in China.

Perhaps this point of view is slightly fatalistic, but it lends itself to a perspective from which one can listen to and absorb arguments different from our own with a wry sense of humour, rather than an indignant and self-satisfied outrage.

The information age. For the "pure" facts of what's happening, and where, and why, and because of whom, I prefer radio news for its brevity and concise nature. For more detailed information, I read the newspapers, whose "objective bias" requires a little more dissemination on my part. But, what I truly enjoy (aspiring to the spirit of wry humour mentioned above) are editorials and columns.

For editorials and columns are personal versions of events and issues that are believed to affect our lives. They cannot lay claim to being objective, though some writers couch their political and personal bents by using the 2nd or 3rd persons, by using sterile and academic language, by using the accepted formula for arguments considered rhetorically sound i.e. thesis, antithesis, and "resulting" (here read "writer's own") thesis. I enjoy them for exactly that lack of objectivity, which is what we are taught every credible media should aspire to. They are, in a certain sense, more honest, simply because the readers own cognizance of the fact that they *are* editorials and columns forces her/him to pick apart the argument to find out where the writer's personal bent or bias lies. The reader, with that knowledge in mind, can proceed to enjoy what has been said with perhaps a lesser attitude of judgment. While this, of course, is not true in cases where the reader's awareness of the bias of the writer prejudices her/him towards the entire article, it *is* valid if the reader simply uses the bias as a way to facilitate the choice of material in the article to be retained or discarded in search of the "truth" of the writer's work, *despite* its overall contextualization.

The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication
The University of New Brunswick

Editor-in-chiefLynne Wanyeki
Managing EditorAllan Carter
Co-News EditorKaren Burgess
Co-News EditorAime Phillips
Business ManagerDiana Maitre
Sports EditorFrank Denis
Entertainment EditorChris Hunt
Co-Features EditorKwame Dawes
Co-Features EditorChris Lohr
Offset EditorJamie Rowan
Distractions EditorSteve Seabrook
Photo EditorDave Smith
Advertising ManagerTara Froning
Advertising DesignLori Durley

STAFF THIS ISSUE

Bill Traer, Murray Nystrom, John Valk, D.J. Eckenrode, Joe Savoie, Mark Bray, Adrian Park, Victor Joseph, Eric Drummie, Bruce Denis, Anand Irrinki, Murray Nystrom, Paul Arsenault, Lynne Saintonge, Luis Cardoso, Mimi Cormier, Brent Dickson, Margaret Languille, Pierre St. Amand, Richard Hall, Chris Kane, Jason Meldrum, Pamela Fulton, Lisa Sheppard, and Elise Craft.

Typists Extraordinaire:

Kembubi Ruganda, Jayde Mockler, Josee Guidry

The Brunswickan, in its 126th 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.

