

EDITORIAL

THE MYSTERY CRITIC

There is a reader who does us the honour of meticulously reading the paper each week. Sometimes s/he is apparently so appalled by the quality of the writing and editing of the paper that s/he writes to the paper complaining. Her/his mail usually includes a segment of the paper (most often the news pages and the editorial page) covered with cryptic hieroglyphics that amount to a somewhat tardy (for the particular issue) proofing of the paper. It is also apparent that the writer of these missives is convinced that the *Brunswickan* is edited by mere incompetents who shouldn't be seen near a newspaper office. Her/his favourite expression is: "You are not an editor if you can't write properly." The person is, of course, anonymous and remains an outsider who has assumed the role of *Brunswickan* nemesis. Very often, her/his observations are astute and useful. But it is glaringly obvious that the individual has assumed that there is a style of writing (her/his own) that constitutes correct writing, and that the person has not fully appreciated the kind of effort required to put out a paper of the size and regularity on a voluntary basis.

The position of this anonymous reader is hardly unreasonable. Indeed, the ideal editors of this paper should be at least literate. Further, those students who write for the paper can be expected to demonstrate at least rudimentary competence in the English language. These are reasonable expectations and we seek to meet them here at the *Brunswickan*. However, it is clear that we will not be able to achieve these ends without a period given to the tedious process of learning through practice. It is grossly unfair to discourage a staffer who has never worked on a paper before by ripping apart their first or second article and declaring to them that they have no right to be in a newspaper office. It is also unfair and quite naive to assume that the malaise in writing competence that afflicts Canadian universities will not affect the quality of writing in the campus papers. Progress will be made only when those who know better come forward to assist those who are seeking to develop. The writing of vitriolic notes on *Brunswickan* pages and the mailing of them to the newspaper offices are not actions that foster an open learning atmosphere. I encourage this individual to come to the *Brunswickan* offices and participate in the process of putting out the paper. If this person is not a student, I still encourage her/him to come up to the offices and meet with some of the staff here. If neither of the above are seen as viable options, I would suggest that the individual send a letter to Blood n' Thunder with their complaints.

Anyone reading the paper today will not have to try very hard to realize that we are in need of competent proof-readers. This task is time-consuming and requires certain basic skills in the English language. Editors cannot cover this area completely as they have to busy themselves searching for writers and guiding the production aspects of their sections. For those concerned enough about the quality of this paper, it is a marvellous opportunity for involvement. Admittedly, the term is already over, but we encourage you to consider putting the *Brunswickan* on your list of possible activities for next term. It is an excellent place for learning under pressure.

I had a good read of two student papers this week and both impressed me with the quality of their material. The first was the *Aquinian* which I thought was particularly well-produced this week. I found their student related news stories reflective of a good deal of investigative work. The material was up to date and informative. I still have difficulty with the plethora of opinions in the paper, but people are writing and that is very important. I am still looking forward to the special feature on McKenna that the paper is hoping to publish. The second paper was the *Gateway* from the University of Alberta. This paper is beautifully laid-out and the proofreading is admirable. Their entertainment section is filled with bold and interesting photographs taken by staff-photographers. The sports section, although somewhat small, is filled with well-written stories. The news section is particularly impressive because of the number of writers that they have on staff. There is much that can be learnt from carefully studying these papers.

Next week's *Brunswickan* will be our last issue for the term. As a special item we would like to encourage readers to write letters to the Blood n' Thunder section giving us some idea of how they found the paper this term. We thank those who have already expressed their opinions and we do take them quite seriously. It is also the issue in which all of those Christmas messages can be put into the Personals in the Classifieds section of the paper. Go for it, folks!

Kwame Dawes



The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication

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