

NEWS

Deadline: Wednesdays at 12:00 Noon. Newsdesk: 453-4983

Possibility of Morgentaler clinic in N.B.

by Karen Burgess

In Friday's edition of the Daily Gleaner Premier Frank McKenna reportedly promised to give Dr. Henry Morgentaler the fight of his life if the doctor attempted to open an abortion clinic in New Brunswick. Now, with a land purchase reportedly having been made by Morgentaler in Fredericton North, the premier may get the chance to spar.

Dr. Morgentaler could not be reached for comment, but it is suspected that the land will be used to house the newest of Morgentaler's clinics.

In response to McKenna's comments, Dr. Wendy Robbins, Co-ordinator of Women's Studies at UNB, says he is "on the wrong side of history." In addition, she objects to the "belligerent and macho attitude that lies behind a comment like that. It wasn't a question of 'well, I'll consult with my constituency, I'll ask the women who are affected by what I do what I ought to be saying as their elected representative.' I think that's most unfortunate."

Robbins feels that in light of New Brunswick opinion polls and statistics, there is a clear mandate for the opening of free standing abortion clinic in the province. She says the process is difficult enough for women without the added trauma of having to travel out of the province, or the country, to have the procedure done.

"There's not nearly the same sense of caring provided in a hospital setting or in a clinic that's 100 miles from home as can be provided for women in this community."

As reported in the February 21 edition of the Gleaner, Justice Minister Edmond Blanchard said the government will try to enforce New Brunswick legislation which states "quite categorically that when these procedures are performed outside approved institutions that they're deemed to be professional malpractice."

Blanchard continues "we have to wait and see how New Brunswick's legislation stands up to any challenge before the courts."

The province of Nova Scotia recently tried to pass legislation restricting the operation of free-standing clinics and currently involved is a legal battle expected to go to the Supreme Court. Abortion is not illegal anywhere in Canada but provinces have the option of restricting conditions under which Medicare will pay for the procedure. Under New Brunswick law, Medicare will only cover abortions which are recommended by two doctors and performed in one of four approved hospitals: in Fredericton, Saint John, Oromocto, and Moncton.

This regulation poses some problems, according to Kit Holmwood, president of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League. Apparently, women who don't live in regions serviced by these hospitals cannot travel to the approved institutions so that their abortions will be covered by Medicare.

An information officer at Health and Community Services New Brunswick confirmed that it is the individual hospital administration's pre-

rogative to refuse service to those outside of their regions. Another problem with the existing system, according to Holmwood, is the length of time it takes for a woman's request for an abortion to be processed. In this province, abortions must be performed before the twelfth week of pregnancy.

She elaborated: "In Saint John you have to have a psychiatric assessment, it went to the Supreme Court --it was a delaying tactic and shouldn't be used but they use it here. And so, you have to know you're pregnant within four to six weeks before you can get through the process."

At this time, any action to be taken on an official statement of intent to open a clinic on Morgentaler's part would have to come from the New Brunswick College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Holmwood says that the colleges in other provinces have chosen to allow the operation of free-standing clinics as it is often safer and less expensive to have an abortion at a clinic than at a hospital due to the hospitals usage of general anesthetic.

In addition, she feels counseling provided at the clinics superior to that given in a hospital setting.

"Doctors don't always have time to give counseling, we don't pay them to do it, we don't train them to do it so it's not surprising that they don't do it."

Dr. Robbins points out that doctors provided "less individual attention to the specialized sorts of concerns that women undergoing this sort of process

have, and some would even be ill disposed towards women making that choice."

Indeed, Holmwood says she has dealt with several cases in which a woman has been told by her doctor that abortions are illegal, or that she is farther along in her pregnancy than she was, thus implying she is not a candidate for the procedure.

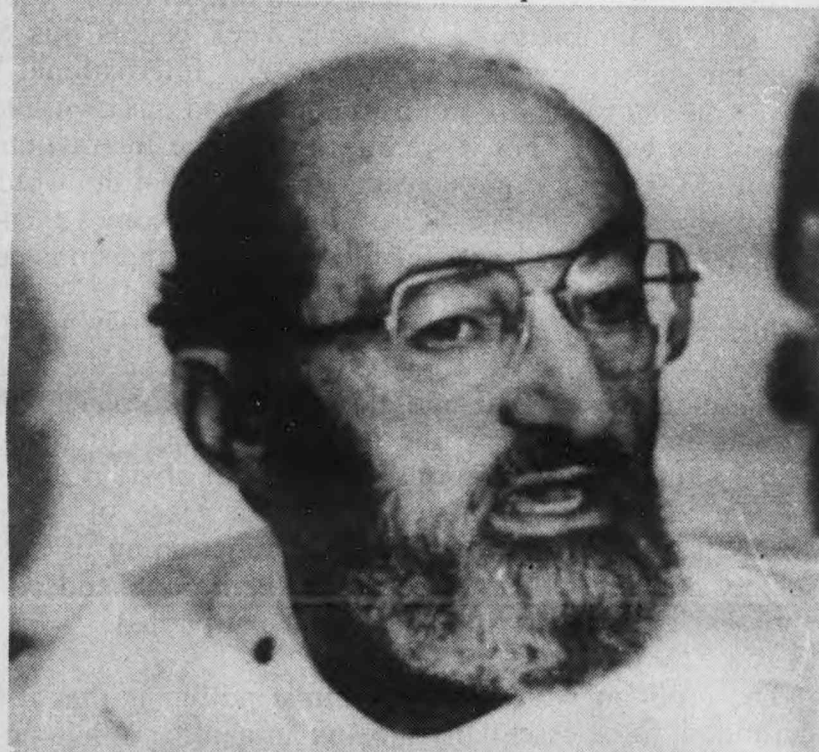
Most importantly, Holmwood says she would like to see a clinic opened in the region because it would provide an opportunity for Morgentaler to more easily give the standard of follow up care upon which he insists.

The government has delin-

eated its position on this issue very clearly, and justice Minister Blanchard was quoted in the Gleaner as saying that the government's actions are intended to reflect the feelings of New Brunswickers. Dr. Robbins feels that "public opinion polls over and over again across the country have shown that the majority of Canadians are in favor of choice in this issue."

She hopes that "there will be large numbers of women, and men too, petitioning to have it included in (Medicare) coverage as soon as it becomes a real option."

Officials from Birthright could not be reached for comment before press time.



Dr. Henry Morgentaler contributed photo

CHSR board member resigns

by Karen Burgess

On Tuesday February 24th, Joe Savoie, one of two Student Union representatives on CHSR's Board of Directors, tendered his resignation from the Board to SU President Greg Lutes.

Savoie says there were several reasons for his resignation. Among those reasons he includes academic concerns, a sense that his involvement in the board is "of no value", and comments made on the CBC radio show, Primetime, about the workings of CHSR.

Savoie says the sentiment of the CBC episode which was aired nationally in December was that the Student Union had an ulterior motive in its dealings with the station: to transform from its current format into "a top 40, mainstream, commercial station."

The Student Union was not given air time to respond to the allegations made during the segment, which featured interviews with several employees of CHSR.

In elaborating on his reaction to the implications of the program Savoie says "I am not a rich middle class white boy who doesn't understand the goals and aspirations of the radio station and to be accused as such I find extremely offensive. Furthermore, the implication that Mr. Whipple (CHSR Station manager) was fired, which he was not, for political reasons, I find even more offensive."

"While I realize the radio station is not responsible for that (the CBC segment) I feel that I'm waging an uphill battle which is beginning to consume too much of my time."

He feels that the board is, unfortunately, not functioning properly but says it is because the Board of Directors is being made to deal with issues "it was never structured to deal with."

James Van Raalte, Student Union VP Finance, who also serves as a SU representative on CHSR's board says he is sorry to see Savoie leave the board as he has been a contributing factor to the community of the board.

Pedestrian hazard at UNB

by Mimi Cormier

A possible hazard for pedestrians crossing Dineen Drive near Head Hall is being criticized by UNB students.

Mark Czapalay, a Computer Science student at UNB, became aware of this hazard in a rather alarming way last month. Czapalay alleges that while using the crosswalk near the corner of Dineen and Bailey he was nearly hit by a campus security car that drove through the crosswalk.

While Czapalay does not wish to pursue the near accident with campus security, he does see a problem with how traffic is regulated on Dineen Drive. Czapalay complains that on Dineen Drive there are often "cars flying right at you." He says that since UNB is "predominantly a walking campus" student should be given a clear right of way.

Czapalay blames the traffic problem on "ignorant drivers" and a lack of adequate traffic signs to "point out the crosswalk" on Dineen Drive. He points out that driving towards Head Hall there are

no yield to pedestrian signs, and the only speed limit sign on the road appears after the crosswalks.

Rick Peacock, UNB's head of security and Traffic, says that the traffic signs on campus "are something that's looked at on a continuous basis", but are "hard to put up with the ground frozen" at the

Changes in Business faculty schedule

by Mimi Cormier

Ronald Storey, the Dean of UNB's faculty of Business Administration, denies a rumour circulating around campus that the course schedule for the next academic year is being arranged to give business students a four day academic week.

The faculty is making changes to its schedule, however that may have instigated the rumour. The "schedule is moving toward two one-and-a-half hour classes," instead of three

separate one hour classes per week, says Storey. This will result in Friday classes being mostly "graduate and upper level courses on three hour blocks."

Storey acknowledges that student may still arrange their schedules to exclude classes on Fridays. Storey does not anticipate lower numbers of students to attend Friday classes during the next academic year, and says that the faculty of Business Administration "will be operating fairly full activities on Fridays."

He also explains that it is difficult for the university to deal with such traffic problems unless the office has "received specific complaints". Czapalay insists that he will be making a formal complaint to have adequate traffic signs put up on Dineen Drive and hopes that the "disgusting" situation will be rectified.