

The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication

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EDITORIAL

The AUAA's and theatre revival at UNB

By Kwame Dawes

Our focus on sports this week must not be misconstrued as an attempt to fill white space in the paper - as some may want to suggest. The success of our male and female swimming teams as AUAA Champions and the close but commendable victory by our wrestling team is deserving of full attention. Apart from the physical pleasures of athletic competition and the sheer pleasure of the game in question; these athletes carry the very core of school-spirit. Unlike regular UNBers who simply come to classes and go home or to their rooms at night; these athletes are forced to contend with other school teams whose motivation for competitive play has everything to do with school pride. Regular non-athletic students, and students who do not have to meet with their counterparts at other schools, rarely develop that UNB spirit because pride in oneself relies on an encounter with "otherness".

Our athletes came together and rallied around an uncanny devotion to victory for the school. I understand that the swimmers were so motivated by the desire to see the campus team win that they went beyond themselves and brought us a remarkable victory. The wrestlers, we understand persisted with consistent effort even when chances of victory were questionable. If they had let up, the disqualification to one of the other competitors which led to their victory would not have been possible. Team spirit and team work is elemental to the successful running of any unit.

We therefore congratulate the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, supporters and other attendants who helped to make all this possible. As part of our joy, *The Brunswickan* dedicates this issue to our AUAA Champions.

It must be said, quickly that this is not meant as a bribe to all the other teams to win their championships, as we can't guarantee front page coverage of sports every week. However, we hope that the athletes will regard our effort as a gesture of appreciation for their hard work.

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UNB's drama world has forced me to eat my words. Almost a year ago, I editorialized with grief and sadness about the absence of active theatre on this campus. My eyes looked to the hill, to St. Thomas, with a smattering of envy. They kept pumping out these high calibre productions. I wondered why. Was UNB simply an unlucky spot for theatre or was there something wrong in the way things were being done? I made some inquiries and discovered that UNB Theatre was not jinxed. There is a lively tradition of theatre performance associated with this campus. History is on our side. So leaving behind the magical and superstitious conjectures, I turned to more pragmatic reasoning. I looked at STU. They have had an admirable tradition of musicals led, to a large extent, by their full time drama tutor Ilkay Silk, a talented, energetic and determined theatre artist with the kinds of creative skills that could only enhance student theatre. At the same time, this administrative order is fleshed by trusting students who have been sold to the glamour (?) of the stage. But the production element is fundamental. UNB did not have an Ilkay Silk. We have some very able and talented theatre practitioners like Kent Thompson and the enthusiastic Edward Mullaly. Mullaly has been very busy working with producing the class productions of his course while carrying the usual course load of any professor. He has tried to encourage student initiative in production; but at first this only resulted in a few individual efforts. However, with the arrival of Kathleen Scherf to the department along with a few more theatre minded graduate students, we have begun to see even more action. Mullaly has the support he has needed and this has given us three plays in one term. George Walker's *Zastrozzi* directed by English graduate student Linda McNutt is a perfect prototype of what the combination of student and faculty collaboration can do. Mullaly acted as Technical Director or facilitator, while Scherf acted as producer. The production included several student actors and a few campus related folks. The show was well done. The acting was competent, sometimes exceptional (Claire Hurley's performance was particularly admirable) and on the most part reflective of discipline and hard work. The set was appropriate and professionally constructed with its understanding of the power of simplicity. The direction showed imagination and intellectual grappling with one of Walker's more difficult plays. A rave review for the production would be inappropriate but what it represents for theatre at UNB makes me sympathize with those who have felt the need to give rave reviews. And there is more. A group of campus related women (student, faculty, graduates) have formed a company that will stage "Flights," a series of monologues in the style of last year's show "Talking With". And then later in the term Judith Thompson, playwright extraordinaire, will be directing the students of the drama course in Arthur Miller's classic production *The Crucible*. So there is much going on. And now there is talk about the staging of Brecht's *Three Penny Opera* next year! Plans are already underway.

At STU we saw an example of how much support there is for local theatre (of the musical anyway). Their wonderful production of "Hair" was sold out on the last two nights! So I am a happy man. Theatre is alive and well around here and it says alot for the future.



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